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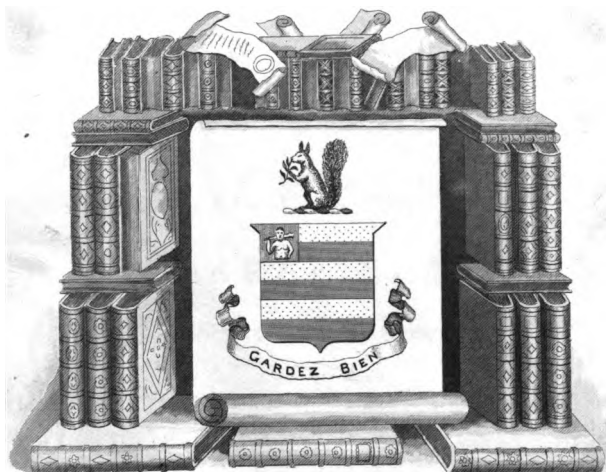
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SAMUEL B. WOODWARD

W. Perry
1804

T H E

J E W I S H S P Y :

B E I N G A

PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL,

A N D

CRITICAL CORRESPONDENCE,

B Y

L E T T E R S,

WHICH LATELY PASSED BETWEEN

C E R T A I N J E W S

I N

TURKY, ITALY, FRANCE, &c.

Translated from the ORIGINALS into FRENCH,

By the MARQUIS D'ARGENS;

' And now done into ENGLISH.

THE THIRD EDITION.

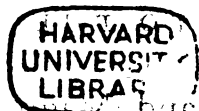
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MDCCLXVI.

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TO THE

Valiant and Magnanimous

Don *QUIXOTE*

De la MANCHA,

Invincible Knight of the LIONS,
©c. ©c. ©c.

 Illustrious Hero of *Cervantes*, not to be paralleled for the Destruction of Sheep and Puppets, courageous and intrepid Assailant of Wind-Mills, and Fulling-Mills, perpetual Terror of the Catchpoles of the holy

A 2 Brother-

iv DEDICATION.

Brotherhood*, &c. &c. permit me to put under your powerful Protection this Fourth Volume of the *Lettres Juives*. A certain crack-brained Knight, to the full as mad and as extravagant as yourself, hath resolved upon their Ruin, and vowed their Destruction. In vain does the Publick think to save them from his Fury. He offers Battle to the whole Universe, and boasts that he will reduce them to Atoms, maugre the Protection of all Enchanters. In this extreme Distress permit me to fly to you for Succour; come, O wrong-

* *La Santa Hermandad*, as it is called in the Original, is a Brotherhood of long standing in *Spain*; where it was first instituted in a Time of very great Confusion, to suppress Robbers: By which Means it is safe travelling in this Country, the Fraternity being spread all over the Kingdom. Their Beadles or Serjeants to apprehend such Offenders are called *Alguazils*.

headed

vi DEDICATION.

in Justice, refuse the *Letters*
Juives that generous Assistance
which I earnestly implore for them;
and in the just Confidence I have
of obtaining from you this Favour,
I remain with the profoundest
Respect,

INCOMPARABLE KNIGHT,

Your most Humble, and most

Obedient Servant,

M. D.

P R E F A C E.

JUST as I had finished this fourth Volume, I received from *Amsterdam* the twenty-third Tome of the *Bibliothèque Française*; in which I found a Letter, wherein, under colour of setting forth the State of the Sciences in *Spain*, there is a warm Declamation against a certain Work, not mentioned indeed, but so plainly described, that one may easily see it means the *Jewish Letters*.

I resolved at first to make no Answer to this Critique, the Author of which passes in the Eye of the World, as well as in the Republick of Letters, for a Kind of Madman, and a perfect Copy of the famous *Don Quixote*. In reality, it is well known, he is as romantically fond of the *Spanish* Nation as the Hero of *La Mancha* was of his incomparable *Dulcinea*. I did not therefore look upon myself as obliged to take Notice of the Objections of such a Person; and I should have held my first Resolution if I had not afterwards reflected, that this impertinent Letter being inserted in a Journal, wherein we sometimes meet with useful and curious Pieces, many Readers might be persuaded the Criticism came from the Journalists themselves. I will therefore just point

out a few of the many Blunders in that ridiculous Piece.

This Knight of *Iberia* undertakes at once the Defence of all the Authors who have been criticized in the *Jewish Letters*. He ought to be pardoned for resenting the Affront put upon them, because a good Part of it falls to his own Share; and he appeals to the Publick against the Injustice which he imagines to have been done to him. *He treats as Blockheads*, says he, *Men of Learning, who have put it in the Power of the Publick to judge of their Erudition*. To this I answer, that there can be nothing so false; and I defy him to name an Author, worthy of Esteem, whom I have not commended. *Des Cartes, Gassendi, Bernier, Mallebranche, Bayle, Locke, s'Gravesande, Vitrarius, Boerhaave, De Thou, Daniel, Pascal, Sirmond, Peteau, Lamy*: In short, all the Learned, of whatever Country, whatsoever Condition, or whatever Religion they are of, Catholicks or Protestants, Jesuits or Jansenists, they were all one to me. Wherever I discovered Merit I have not scrupled to own it. I have been equally just to the Authors of Works relating to Poetry and Romances: I have commended *Corneille, Racine, Milton, Pope, Petrarch, Tasso, Guarini, Don Lopez de Vega, Cervantes, Crebillon, Voltaire, Rousseau*. It is true, that even at the Time I allowed the last to have Wit, I denied him somewhat else, which

which I thought I both might and ought to do, since it was taken from him by a solemn Arret of the first Parliament of *France*. Those I have mentioned are all good Authors; and for their Works I shall ever have the highest Esteem. Where then are the Writers I have treated as *Blockheads!* who had nevertheless given the Publick an Opportunity of judging of their Erudition? I fancy the Critick had a mind to point out himself. But how entered it into his Brain that his copying three Pages from *Moreri's* Dictionary, and three more from the Dictionary of *Cornaille*, and connecting them with Scraps from other Books, and with his Pillage from *Beudrand*, whose Dictionary he has almost robbed of every Word; how could he think, I say, that this would give him the Title and Character of a Man of Learning? I proceed to other Complaints:

It is astonishing, says this Critick, *that a Person of Birth, Education, Wit, Fortune, and honourable Employments, should quit all, and take up the mean Employment of an Author.* These Praises bestowed upon me are only Garlands to adorn the Victim; and I am raised to this Height purely to be tumbled down from it. Before I leave this Article I must and will say it, that though it were true, that Fortune had placed me in a splendid Condition, there is nothing shameful in my quitting it, in order to abandon myself entirely to Philosophy, and

to enjoy that Sweet Satisfaction which results from the Cultivation of the Sciences. Were the Works of *Rockfoucaut*, *Montaigne*, *Malberbe*, *Racan*, or *Ruffi Rabutin* ever objected to them as a Crime? The famous Cardinal *Richelieu* was as zealous for having the Reputation of an Author as he was for the Destruction of *Spain*. This Critick, no doubt, despises the Cardinal, and thinks him much to blame. But to proceed to his Reproaches.

He ranges me in the Class of those Libertine Writers who set Pen to Paper for no other End but to run down Religion, Virtue, Knowledge, and Merit. As to Virtue and Religion, I have in the Prefaces of the first and second Volumes of this Work made it clearly enough appear, that none but a perfect Slanderer could be guilty of such Language: And as to the small Respect he says I have shewn towards the truly Learned, I have just explained myself on that head. If, indeed the Critick is really a learned Man, then I own I have done wrong to condemn his Works; but this is a Point which I leave to the Decision of the Publick.

As this Censurer hath not thought proper to enter any Detail, but only runs out into general Invectives against me, while he commends excessively a number of miserable Authors, it is impossible I should answer him as to the Faults he may find in this Book. Before
I con-

I conclude this Preface, therefore, I will examine some of the Praise of which he has been so lavish on the *Spanish* Writers; and I shall evidently demonstrate, that they are a hundred times more hurt by his Compliments than they could have been by the most abusive Criticism. One may well apply to him, in this Case, the fine Passage in *Tacitus: Pessimum Inimicorum Genus Latidantes.*

Our Critick begins by establishing the Goodness, Beauty, and Delicacy of the *Spanish* Genius on the Works of *St. Teresa*, *Lewis* of *Granada*, and the Reverend Father *Rodriguez*; and he even proceeds to insult me by questioning whether I know those Books: I dare say, they are as well known to me as to him, though I value them much less; especially *Rodriguez*, of whose writing I have read some very bad Books, very meanly translated, and so generally condemned, that *Moliere* was not afraid to ridicule them in one of his Pieces. I am astonished the Critick did not know this Line:

She read Rodriguez, and used mental Prayer.

Perhaps it was a wilful Forgetfulness; for as to Theatrical Matters, they are to be sure within the Sphere of his Knowledge.

I come next to the Dramatick Poets, whom this Critick has commended in a Manner so ridiculous, that if he had intended it, he could
not

not have fatirized them more severely. These are his own Words: *The Spanish Dramatick Authors have been long the Magazines whence our Authors have supplied themselves.* Scarron and Montfleuri are Instances. Can any thing be said so much to the Disgrace of the Spanish Poets as to make them the Inventors of the vilest Farces, and to give them for Disciples and Imitators the worst and most despicable of our Writers? What Notion should we have of certain Poets if we were told that *Pradon* formed his Taste by perusing their Books? Should we not have reason to regard them as the very Sink of the Republick of Letters? It must be confessed the Critick has but bad Talents for commending. Defend me, Heaven, from such a Panegyrist! I even prefer his Hatred to his Friendship. In order to shew him the Difference between the Praises I have bestowed on some valuable *Spanish* Writers and the sad Stuff he writes about them, I shall here report what I have said of *Don Lopez de Vega* in my 118th Letter: *That Author hath written Comedies so excellent, that the great Corneille assures us, that he would have given two of his best Tragedies to have been the Inventor of the Lyar. Thou knowest it was upon the Plan of this Spanish Play the French Poet composed his.* I leave it now to be decided, whether the Critick or I aimed to affront the *Spanish* Nation. But I shall be still in a better Way to obtain

obtain a favourable Verdict, when the Reader sees the Parallel of what we have both said of the *Spanish* Historians.

The Critick contents himself with mentioning *the History of Arragon by Zulita*, and *The General History of Spain by Mariana*. By an unaccountable Stroke of Folly, of two Authors mentioned by him, there is one who ought to be abhorred by all good Men: Not but that the History of *Mariana* is a good Book; but he composed another*, which the Parliament of *Paris* condemned to the Flames, and which the Jesuits themselves have disavowed. In this Work he has insinuated, that it is not only lawful, but laudable to put to death an heretical or a tyrannical King: He praises, even to excess, the execrable Monk who murdered *Henry the Third*, and is not ashamed to call him the Honour and Glory of *France*. It must be acknowledged, that since the Critick resolved to quote but two Authors, he ought to have avoided making *Mariana* one of them, or else he should have followed my Example, and mentioned several others at the same Time. I shall transcribe from my 118th Letter the Names of some, in the order they are therein commended: *Antonio de Solis*, *Sandoval*, *Antonio de Herrera*, *Don Bartholomew de las Casas*. Nor have I forgot to

* *De Rege & Regis Institutione.*

praise such Poets and Romance Writers as are worthy the Esteem of Readers of Judgment : As *Michael de Cervantes*, *Matthew Alman*, *Don Alonzo de Hercilla*, *John Rufo*, *Christopher de Virves*, &c. It may easily be determined from the Number of those Authors, whether it was my Design to sink the Reputation of one Nation, in order to raise that of another. It is true, I did maintain, and do still, that the *Spaniards* have not one Philosopher amongst them; and that none they can have by reason of the Inquisition. And is not this a Truth of which the whole World is convinced? The Critick indeed will not allow it. Like a magnanimous and unconquerable Knight he is determined to stand to his Opinion right or wrong: An exact and worthy Copy of the Hero of *Cervantes*, with whom there is no living on good Terms, if one does not purely and simply confess, that the very Faults of his charming *Dulcinea* are superior to the Virtues of the greatest Princesses.

In order to give the greater Weight to his Opinion, the Critick calls in the Authority of *Father Rapin*, who, in his *Reflections on Philosophy*, says the *Spaniards* excel in Metaphysics. But that Author's Blunder is no Excuse at all for the Critick's: For example, the Commendation given by this Jesuit to the Physics and Logick of *Aristotle* is sufficient to shew
whether

whether his Opinion ought to be looked on as decisive in Matters of Philosophy*. *There appeared nothing, says he, that was fixed and regular, either in Logick or true Philosophy, before Aristotle. This Genius, so very rational and intelligent, entered so deep into the Abyss of human Understanding, that he penetrated to its most secret Recesses, by the accurate Distinctions he made as to its Operations. Before him they had never sounded this vast Ocean of the human Thoughts, in order to judge of its Depth. Aristotle was the first who discovered this new Way, in order to attain to Science by the Evidence of Demonstration, and to proceed to Demonstration geometrically by the Mode of Syllogism, the most accomplished Work, the greatest Effort of the human Mind. To shew the Impertinence and Ridicule of this Eulogium, and also what sort of Books those are which passed with Father Rapin for Master-Pieces in Philosophy, I shall only cite a Passage from Des Cartes, another from Mallebranche, and a third from Locke. Whoever would be more fully convinced of the Nonsense of the Writings of this Grecian Sage, need only consult the illustrious Gassendi in his Exercitationes Paradoxicæ adversus Aristotelicos.*

* *Rapin, Reflexions sur la Logique, Nam. iv. p. 373,*
374.

I begin

I begin with transcribing the Opinion of Mallebranche*: Aristotle seldom reasoned on any other than the confused Ideas we receive by the Senses, and other vague, general, and indeterminate Notions, which conveyed nothing particular to the Understanding. The Terms made use of commonly by this Philosopher served only to express confusedly to the Senses and the Imagination, the indiscriminate Notions he had of sensible Things, or else were contrived to make up so loose and indeterminate a Discourse as expressed nothing distinctly.

Let me next introduce Des Cartes†: The Logick of the Schools is properly speaking nothing more than a Dialectick; which teaches us a Method of imparting to others what we know, or even of putting a Parcel of Words together without Judgment upon Things we know not, consequently it corrupts Good Sense rather than augments it.

I close my Confutation of Father Rapin with a Passage from Mr. Locke‡: We reason, says he, much better, and with more perspicuity, when we observe only the Connection of Proofs, without methodizing our Thoughts, or forming them into Syllogisms. . . . God hath not been so sparing of his Favours to Man-

* Mallebranche, *Recherche de la Verité*, Liv. V. Chap. ii. p. 388.

† Des Cartes, *Prinçipes de la Philosophie*, Preface.

‡ Essay on Human Understanding, Book iv. Ch. xvii.

kind,

kind, as only to make us two-legged Creatures, and leave to Aristotle the Care of making us reasonable Beings.

One sees by this how little the Authority of Father *Rapin* is to be relied upon, especially in respect to Philosophers; and inasmuch as he is profuse in his Praises of *Aristotle*, one need not be very much surprized at the Praise he bestows on the *Spanish* Metaphysicians. It is but a natural Consequence of his Way of Thinking, all those Metaphysicians being zealous Followers of *Aristotle*. But to shew either the Ignorance or Knavery of our Critick, if there be so many excellent Philosophers and Metaphysicians in *Spain*, why did he not name some of them? This he could not possibly do, or at least not without making himself still more ridiculous than he justly was before.

To finish the Answer I have condescended to give to his Objection, I will endeavour to confute his Assertion, that I affect to decry the *Spanish* Nation. It is true that I said, and do say it again, that they are proud, haughty, lazy, superstitious, and excessively submissive to the Monks. But though I thus exposed their Faults, as I have done those of other Nations, I have done justice to their Virtues. Without repeating all I have ever said on this Subject, I will here cite only a few Lines from my 106th Letter: *During the Reign of Philip V. there have been very able Men in the Spanish*

Spanish Ministry; but the Storms to which all Courts are liable, have removed them from their Places. The Man that is most cried up here is Cardinal Alberoni: Not only the Strangers, who are here in great Numbers, but also many Spaniards do justice to that able Minister. . . . Since the Accession of Philip V. Spain hath overcome half the Evils which were brought upon her by such as were intrusted with the Administration of Affairs under Philip IV. and Charles II. Her Troops are numerous, brave, and well disciplined. There is a fourth Part more People in the Country than there was, by means of the great Numbers of French and Flemmings who are settled there; and this Crown, which for one while was perfectly despised, makes as good a Figure now, as it did formerly.

I think I have said enough to shew the Folly, the Ignorance, and Knavery of this pretended Iberian Knight; for I shall not reply to his Invectives, and to those gross Reflections which he has thrown out against me in the Close of his Epistle. God forbid that I should ever introduce the Language of Fish-stalls from *Parnassus*: It is the Mind alone, and not the Body, which is a Member of the Republick of Letters. Were it not for this, how often should we be confounded to know in what Rank some People ought to be placed?

Where,

Where, for Example, should we bestow a Man, who, after being in his Youth a Rope-Dancer, a Tumbler, a Player, in his Old-age married two Dressers of the Actresses one after another, and last of all, a Turkey-driver that was reduced to serve in an Ale-house; and, which is still meaner, to be his own Servant? Sure am I, that the Critick must allow, if this *individual Person* was a Member of the Republick of Letters, it would be very difficult to find such an Original a proper Station.

Before I conclude this Preface, I shall say a Word or two of some Translations made of the *Jewish Letters*: I am told there is a *Dutch* Translation which will quickly appear, the MS. being actually in the Hands of a Book-seller*. I have not seen it; and if I should see it, I am no judge of it, since I understand not the Language: But one, who is a Master of it, says, that it is extremely well done, which is all I know of the matter, having not the least Acquaintance with its Author. I am informed also from *Germany*, that the two first Volumes of the *Lettres Juives* are translated into *High Dutch*.

• It is just now printed at the *Hague*, and dedicated to me: I am very glad of this Opportunity of expressing my Gratitude for this Piece of Civility, and the just Sense I have of the Honour done me, in communicating my Letters to a Nation for whom I have an infinite Esteem.

But what is still more singular than all this beyond Comparison is, that I have received Advice that they are actually re-printing this Work at *Avignon*, and that two Volumes of it are already published, but miserably mangled and deformed; which is the common Fate of every Edition that is counterfeited in the Pope's Dominions.



THE



T H E
J E W I S H S P Y.

L E T T E R CXXI.

AARON MONCECA, *to* ISAAC ONIS,
Caraite, formerly a Rabbi at Constanti-
nople.

YOU know, dear *Isaac*, how much I was prejudiced against the Cabalists. Shall I own to you my Weakness? Since I have been in this Country, a Conversation I had with a Person addicted to the occult Sciences, hath inclined me to believe that many Things I formerly thought ridiculous, are neither impossible nor incompatible with true Philosophy. Not that I approve all that is said by the Disciples of *Paracelsus*. But I think, that though it is certain there are no such Beings as *Gnomes, Sylphs, Salamanders, and*
VOL. IV. B *Ordines,*

Ondines *, yet there is nothing in the Belief of them absurd, or contrary to the Laws of Nature, as most of our modern Philosophers pretend. My Reasons are these. What Weight they will have with you I know not.

In order to deny the Possibility of Existence to any Thing, there must be Proof not only of its Non-existence, but of its Incapacity of Existence. But I find no Proofs of the latter Sort against *Sylphs*, *Salamanders*, *Gnomes* and *Ondines*. What Impossibility is there in supposing, that there are animate Bodies composed of so subtle and delicate a Matter as not to fall under the Cognizance of our Senses? We admit that they are not strong enough to penetrate the Recesses of Nature, where the first Elements of Things lie hid. They perceive none but the more gross Causes. We can derive from thence no Right to deny, that those delicate Principles are in being. Why then should we believe, that there cannot be animated Creatures, composed of a Matter so thin as not to strike our Senses?

Before the Invention of Microscopes, we knew not that Vinegar contained an astonishing Quantity of Worms: We boldly denied that there were little Fishes in all the Water we drank; and yet we have been many Years convinced of the Existence of all these Animals. Since then there is a Number of animated Creatures in Water, which our naked Eyes cannot discover, why may not the like be found in the Air and in the other Elements?

But it will be said, *these Insects are not concealed from us but through their Littleness, whereas it is pre-*

* According to the *Cabalists*, the *Sylphs* inhabit the Air, the *Gnomes* the Earth, that is, within it, the *Salamanders* in the Region of Fire, and the *Ondines* the Water.

tended that the Gnomes, Sylphs, &c. are of the ordinary Size of Men.

To this I answer, that the Height of the Gnomes and of the Sylphs is no Reason why they should become visible, while the Parts of which they are compounded are supposed to be extremely delicate. A Space of Air six Feet long strikes the Sight no more than one of a Foot or of an Inch. In like manner, supposing the Gnomes to be composed of a light and aerial Matter, their Stature would contribute nothing to their becoming visible. Let us imagine a Column of those Worms which are found in Vinegar, extending from the Earth to the Sky; our Eyes, without the Assistance of Microscopes, would not be at all affected by this Column, notwithstanding its immense Extension, because its component Parts fall not under the Cognizance of our Senses. Thus, tho' an infinite Number of Atoms fill up the Space between the Earth and the Moon, yet to us it appears void, because the Matter with which it is filled, is not discernible by our Senses. It is to no purpose, therefore, to oppose the Existence of these Elementary People, by alledging, that we do not perceive them. It suffices to establish the Possibility of the Thing, to prove that a great Number of living Creatures actually exist, which our Senses, unassisted, cannot discern.

When we once admit, that the Air may be peopled with invisible Creatures, it naturally follows, that the Earth, the Water, and the Fire, which are Elements composed of Parts more easily united, have also in them the Power of producing a Number of Bodies which God may animate, and yet, by the Delicacy of their Parts, they will escape our Senses. *But, reply the Philosophers, we have no Idea of these pretended reasonable Creatures; we know not how*
B 2
they

they exist; we are intirely ignorant of their Forms and Figures, and it is ridiculous to admit a Thing of which we have not any Notion.

This manner of reasoning, with Submission to the Learned among the Moderns, is far from being conclusive. *Have you, it may be replied to them, any more distinct Notion of your own Soul? Do you comprehend any thing more about it, than that it is a Spirit? Do you know what Form or Figure it has? No, without doubt. You admit, however, its Existence. Why then will you deny that of Sylphs and Gnomes, of which you have a less confused Idea than of a Spirit? Because whatever is supposed to be material, however delicate it may be, falls under the Cognizance of the Human Understanding.*

The Wit of Man is so bounded, that it is not only very possible it may not have any Idea of certain Creatures; but it might even very easily happen, that a great Number of knowing People might, nevertheless, be ignorant of the Possibility of Animals living in Water. Let us suppose that a certain Number of Men live in a Country of a dry sandy Soil, far from the Sea and Rivers, and furnished only with Pits. The Thing is by no means impossible. In many of the Desarts of *Arabia*, there is only such Pits dug by the *Bedouins*. These Men, without doubt, would have no Idea of Fish, if they did not hear of them from others. They would certainly look upon it as a Thing absurd to suppose, that any Creature could live long in Water, when they saw such Land-Animals presently die, as happen to fall therein. I ask, if Fish would exist the less, or if the Reasonings of these sort of People would destroy the Cod in the *Mediterranean*, or the Whales in the Ocean?

It is the same Thing with respect to the Philosophers who deny the Possibility of *Sylphs* and of *Gnomes*;

Gnomes; they know nothing of what passes in the Air; their short Sight represents it to them as a great wide Space, a large and extended Mass, and they pretend to judge of what passes in that Mass by the Ideas they have of a void Space, which is intirely oposite thereto. For though the Philosophers are persuaded that the Extent between the Earth and the Firmament is full of Bodies; or, to express myself better, is one intire Body; yet their Senses seem to get the better of their Meditations, when they deny the Possibility of the existing of these elementary People.

You see, my dear *Isaac*, the Reasons upon which I ground my Opinion. As to the rest, I am fully persuaded that we cannot have any Sort of Commerce with these *Sylphs* and *Gnomes*. I say, I am as fully persuaded of the Impossibility of this, as of the Possibility of their Existence. Far from giving in to the ridiculous Tales and chimerical Visions of the *Cabalists*, I affirm, that if there should exist such Elementary People, they can never render themselves visible to Men, as it is also impossible for Men to strengthen or quicken their Senses to such a Degree as to be able to penetrate what God and Nature think proper to conceal from them. I cannot help laughing when I hear a *Cabalist* gravely tell me, *That concentrating the Fire of the World by concave Mirrors in a Globe of Glass, gaining thereby a certain solar Powder, which being purified from the other Elements, and a certain Quantity thereof taken daily, I may exalt the Fire within me to such a Degree, as to become, in some measure, of a fiery Nature.*

The Secret for obtaining the Familiarity of *Gnomes*, *Sylphs* and *Nymphs*, seems to me not a Grain less ridiculous. It consists in taking a Glass full of Air, mingled with Water or with Earth; this is to

be left for a Month exposed to the Sun; then the Elements are to be separated; which being performed, we have a wonderful Medicine, capable of exalting in us whatever Element we would have predominant, and of rendering our Senses quick enough to discern these Elementary People*.

Good Sense and the Light of Nature are sufficient to shew me the Folly of this sort of Reasoning, and the Impossibility there is of effecting any thing by these *Cabalistical Secrets*. For suppose I would make an Acquaintance with a *Salamander*, of what Use would all the solar Powder be that I could possibly amass together? Would it ever destroy in me that terrestrial Matter that is every Day augmented by my Food? Could it ever get the better of the Air, by which I live and breathe? Suppose I had swallowed ever so much of this Powder, a Quarter of an Hour after I take in a great Quantity of Air, and my Lungs, which receive and reject, my Nostrils and my Mouth which give it Entrance into my Body, are the sworn Enemies of the Element of Fire, which I would have predominant over the rest. The same may be said of the other Secrets, which tend to render some one Element predominant in Man, and thereby to give him an igneous or aquatic Nature.

The Blindness of the *Cabalists* goes yet a greater length. They assure us, that by applying to the Navel a little of the Earth prepared for obtaining the Society of the Gnomes, one may sustain the Want of

* The *English* Reader may see this System set in a beautiful Light in POPE'S RAPE of the LOCK. If he likes better to read it in Prose, he may satisfy himself by perusing Count *Gabalus*, whence our Author borrows his Quotations.

Poëd

Food and Drink, without any sort of Inconvenience. The famous *Paracelsus* affirms, that he tried this; and it must be owned, that he was either a great Fool or an impudent Lyar, who durst assert so evident an Imposture as this is to the Face of the Publick.

I am not astonished at all, when I see a *Cabalist* writing such Impertinencies as these, because at the same time I discern Stories as absurd and as contrary to good Sense, as gravely told by the most eminent Doctors in all Religions. How many Lyes have been written by our Rabbies on the Subject of the *Satyrs* and *Fawns* of Antiquity? Rabbi *Abraham* really imagined there were such Creatures, but that they were imperfect, because God was surprized by the Approach of the Evening of the Sabbath, and had not Time sufficient to make an end of them. Among the *Nazarenes*, *Tertullian*, *Justin*, *Lactantius*, *Cyprian*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria* and *Athenagoras*, fancied these *Fawns* were Angels transformed into this Shape for the Crime they committed, when God threw so many of them into Hell; and they concluded this Fall of Angels to have happened on account of their suffering themselves to become enamoured of Women. The *Pagans* pushed this Error still farther; for they held these *Fawns* to be Divinities.

Among Sentiments so extraordinary as these are, it is impossible that a Philosopher, who makes use of his Reason, should adopt any one of them. They are equally ridiculous and contrary to the Light of Nature. It may be even that the *Satyrs*, as described by the Ancients, never did exist; and that many useless Dissertations have been made on the Ideas of some Painter or Poet, who was the Creator of these imaginary Beings. I am of opinion, that

previous to the explaining of a Thing, we ought seriously to consider whether it exists, or whether ever it did exist. *Descartes* has given us a long Explication of the perpetual Lamps that are to be found in the Tombs of the Ancients; and we have since been convinced that the Fact is false. *Democritus* put his Wit to the torture for several Days, to account for Wool which he fancied he had found growing on the Figs in his Garden. He made thereupon a Discourse, with which himself and his Friends were very well satisfied. His Maid, however, diverted herself at their Expence, by disabusing them, shewing that all the learned Researches of this Philosopher was so much Study and Pains thrown away. It may be the *Fawns* of Antiquity greatly resembled the Figs of *Democritus*; and those who have made Dissertations on these Half-Men Half-Brutes, would be greatly surprized, if they should find in any ancient Author, that they never existed any where but in his Imagination and in his Writings.

I will not, however, dear *Isaac*, pretend to affirm, that what is said with regard to *Fawns*, ought to be considered as invented at pleasure; on the contrary, I believe their Existence possible. We read in the Life of *Paul* the Hermit, written by *Jerome*, a famous Doctor among the *Nazarenes*, as also in that of *Anthony*, another Hermit, composed by *Athanasius*, that these solitary Persons had long Conversations with *Fawns*; and that they owned to them that they were not unacquainted with the Existence of a Deity*. If we refuse Credit to these Authors, we find
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* According to St. *Jerome*, St. *Anthony* met with a *Centaur*, exactly like what is described in the Poets. The same Author assures us, that not long after this St. *Anthony* saw also a *Satyr*, resembling those we see in Paintings.

in *Pliny*, that *Satyrs* are frequent in the *Indies*. *Plutarch* assures us, that they presented to *Sylla*, as he passed by *Dyrachium*, now *Durazza*, in *Albania*, a living *Satyr*. The *Roman* considered him attentively, but could make nothing of his Language, his Voice being excessively harsh, seeming to participate of the Neighing of a Horse, and the Cry of a Goat *.

This Passage in History inclines me to think, that all the *Satyrs* we hear of, were no other than Monsters produced by criminal Converse between Mankind and the Females of other Animals; and that these Creatures, far from having Virtues superior to Mortals, had much more of the Brute than of the Man, not being able to express themselves, but in all respects like the *Satyr* of *Sylla*. The Superstition of *Paganism* made Deities of these Half-Men, the *Nazarenes* will have them to be Angels or Demons, the *Jews* imperfect Creatures; the Philosopher, seeming to disdain the Examination of this Question, contents himself with denying their Existence, that he may not be obliged to explain their Natures.

Preserve thy Health, dear *Isaac*, live content and satisfied, and may the God of our Fathers heap Riches upon thee.

Hamburgb.

Conspicit (Antonius) hominem equo mixtum, cui opinio Pæctarum Hypocentauro vocabulum indidit . . . Nec mora inter saxosum convallē haud grandem, homunculem vidit, aduncis naribus, fronte cornibus asperatū, cujus extrema pars corporis in caprarum pedes desinebat. Hieronymus, epistol. iii. de vita Pauli, primi Eremitæ. See also the 4th Part of the Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters; wherein the Wonders reported by St. Jerome are fully considered.

Plutarch in the Life of Sylla.



L E T T E R CXXII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constanti-
nople.

I Do not know, dear *Isaac*, to what Cause to attribute that violent Hatred which all People profess to have against those of our Nation. Whatever Religion they have, in whatever Climate they inhabit, they seem to agree in this Point. The *Mahommedans*, the *Papish Nazarenes*, the *Reformed*, the *Arminians* and the *Lutherans*, despise, equally agree in despising us, and carry their Despite to Excess. I for some time thought that this Antipathy might be occasioned by a Diversity of Belief. But I was obliged to change this way of thinking, when I saw Numbers differing in Religion, who had notwithstanding the most perfect Esteem for each other. The *Quakers* differ as widely as we from the *Nazarenes*; they have no Sacrament, not even so much as that of Baptism; however, the *Nazarenes* do not either hate or despise them.

We must look therefore for some other Cause than Religion, in order to account for that Antipathy which all Nations have to us. I do indeed believe, that Religion influences the lower Class of People in their Notions of *Jews*, in some measure; but it is certain, that it does not determine them intirely; wherefore, there must be some particular Subject whence the unanimous Hatred of all People must flow. Did it come purely from Difference in
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point of Faith, why should the *Turks* hate us more than they do the *Nazarenes*? Or these latter, why should they detest us more than *Turks*?

I believe, dear *Isaac*, that we ought to seek in the evil Conduct of our own Brethren, what we generally attribute to Difference in Religion. If we credit certain *Nazarene* Historians, we shall find in their Writings, that the horrid Crimes of certain *Jews* have in all Times had desperate Consequences in respect to our Nation. *Rigord*, Physician and Historiographer to *Philip Augustus*, writes, that in 1180, our Brethren settled in *Paris* would needs make a Sacrifice on the Solemnization of the Passover, supposing they might draw down the divine Clemency, by immolating a *Nazarene*. They carried off, says he, a young Lad of twelve Years old, whose Name was *Richard*, the Son of a rich Tradesman, and after they had almost by whipping tore off his Flesh from his Bones, they crucified him. This barbarous Action coming to the knowledge of the *French*, all who had any Concern in this dreadful Sacrifice were put to death, and our whole Nation for ever banished that Kingdom.

France is not the only Country wherein we are charged with such Cruelties. The Inhabitants of the City of *Trent* commemorate annually a Thing of the same kind perpetrated on a little Boy called *Simonet*, the Son of a Shoemaker whose Name was *Simon*. The *Jews*, say they, having stript the Boy, did in the most cruel Manner draw out all his Blood, in order to make use of it in celebrating the Passover, and afterwards threw the Carcase into a common Shore, which ran under the Synagogue. The Thing being discovered, the *Jews* were severely punished, and the *Nazarenes* shew to this very Day, the House in which this villainous Act was perpetrated.

I really cannot think of settling my Opinion as to these Facts, when I either read them or hear them talked of. I am thoroughly satisfied, that such Cruelties are no where practised in our Synagogues at this Day, and I can hardly bring myself to believe that they were ever practised heretofore. However, these Accounts are accompanied with such Circumstances, that it is almost impossible not to admit the Matters of Fact. But after all, if it were true that there were some *Jews* so wicked and so furious as to run into Excesses of this Sort, ought their Crimes to affect a whole Nation? There is nothing more easy, than the Proof that only a few mad and vile People were ever guilty of Things of this Nature, and that the *Jews* in general were not only ignorant of them, but if they had been acquainted with such Practices, would have had them in the utmost Detestation. In order to establish this, we need only consider what the Historiographer of *Philip Augustus* says. *He assures us, that the Criminals were punished with Death, and the Remainder were banished the Kingdom.* There were but fifteen or sixteen *Jews* executed; if more had been found guilty, without doubt the *Nazarenes* would not have spared them. The whole Nation thus exiled, had nothing to do with these Cruelties. However, by astonishing ill Luck, that Horror, which the Crime of a few particular People justly merited, rested upon the Nation; and they are persuaded in *France*, that the *Jews* in general approve of such detestable Sacrifices. There needs no more, my Friend, to render them odious to the whole World: What can there be more scandalous to a Nation, than to have been driven out of a great Kingdom for such abominable Deeds?

It is not solely to Prejudices of this sort that we ought to attribute the Aversion and the Dislike which People have towards us. The sordid Avarice, and the Perfidy of some of our Brethren, have made us mortally hated. Thus the innocent suffer for the Crime of the guilty, and a Number of *Israelites* worthy the Esteem of all honest Men, zealous Observers of the divine Law, are without Distinction confounded with People whom themselves despise, and whom they are the most ready to condemn.

Our Rabbins ought to apply themselves to writing Books of Morality. Such Works would be much more useful, and do us more honour among such as differ from us in Religion, than that monstrous Heap of Visions which are to be found in most of our Authors, and which serve only to discredit our Writers and our Nation. I would be content to see our Doctors attentive in explaining the Law, and in applying it principally to the discouraging the Practice of those Vices most-reigning amongst us; insisting constantly on the heinousness of the Act of taking away another Man's Property in the Sight of God, and the Baseness of Usury in the Sight of Men. If they could once bring this Doctrine to prevail, and could induce our Brethren to be less attached to, and susceptible of the Temptation of filthy Lucre, I doubt not but they would enable them to regain the Esteem and Regard of all Nations. Why should they refuse it us, if we were worthy of it? I have before shewn, that Difference in Religion is not a Reason which determines the Esteem or the Dislike of Men. Besides, dear *Isaac*, ours hath in itself such Beauties, that if the *Jews* were once become a virtuous People, they would be at least secure of the Friendship of Philosophers, learned and reasonable Men. But far, my Friend, very far are the Rabbins from endeavouring to eradicate Avarice from

from the Hearts of the *Israelites*, on the contrary, they are the first themselves of giving Examples of sordid Covetousness; insomuch, that it may be said of the Prayers in our Synagogues, as one of the Ancients said of those heretofore made by the *Pagans*: *Do we observe*, says he, *any go to the Temples in order to beseech the Gods to give him Perfection in Eloquence, or to discover to him the Secrets of Philosophy? Nay, do they so much as ask Rectitude of Mind, or Health of Body? But of all who go to the Capitol, this is the Custom, before they reach the very Threshold of the Gate, the one promises great Offerings to the Deity he worships, provided he hastens the Death of a rich Relation; another, that he may discover a bidden Treasure; a third, that he may be lucky enough to acquire a large Estate in Business*.*

Such are the Prayers which most of the *Jews* offer to the Divinity. They forget that they are forbidden in the Law to wish for the Goods of another, and the Rabbins, far from putting them in mind of this divine Precept, seem to have banished it entirely from their own Thoughts. After this we need not think it strange that the *Nazarenes* have propagated a certain malicious Fable against us, viz. That we have made an Oath to cheat as often as we have an Opportunity. They judge of our Precepts by our Actions. I am sensible, my Friend, that the famous *Leo of Modena* hath refuted with great Quickness such as have endeavoured to fix

* *Quis unquam venit in templum & votum fecit, si ad eloquentiam pervenisset? Quis, si philosophiæ fontem invenisset? Ac ne bonam quidem mentem, aut bonam valetudinem petunt. Sed statim antequam limen Capitolii tangant, alius donum promittit, si propinquum divitem extulerit; alius si thesaurum effoderit; alius si ad trecenties H. S. salvus pervenerit. Petronius in Satir.*

so criminal a Usage upon us, and hath well shewn how far we are from following such pernicious Maxims, or from regarding them as Points of Doctrine. But notwithstanding the learned Writings of that excellent *Jew*, there are at this Day a Multitude of *Nazarenes* who persuade themselves they do not do us the least Injustice in imputing to us this criminal Sentiment.

We shall never be able to regain the Esteem of other Nations, but by changing our Conduct intirely, and becoming as remarkable for our Disinterestedness, as we are at present for our Avarice. Not that I pretend to prevent our Brethren from making an honest Profit, or from gaining by Commerce. There is nothing more lawful. What I would be at is this; that they should be more sincere, and that Uprightness and Candour should be visible in all their Dealings.

When I have defended this Opinion against *Jews* of a contrary Sentiment, and who did not think we were bound to use so much Delicacy in our Dealings with the *Nazarenes*, I could never perceive any Strength in their Reasons. *We pay, say they, exorbitant Imposts. Princes, in many Countries, look upon us as so many Beasts. They sell us the very Air that we breathe. It is by Dint of Money that we obtain a Residence among them. In some Towns of Germany they oblige us to pay twenty Pence an Hour as long as we stay. Is not this an astonishing Imposition? Are we obliged to act with Candour towards those who so cruelly persecute us? And are we not at Liberty to make Reprisals on the Nazarenes, who thus enrich themselves by our Labours?*

Whatever at first Sight there may seem to be in these Reasons, they are entirely overthrown by this single Principle, that it is not justifiable to commit
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one Crime in order to punish another. In this respect I find the Morality of the *Nazarenes* admirable. It must be owned that they do not practise it; but it is however one of the principal Points of their Religion, that we are not to commit Evil upon any Account. Their civil Laws agree on this Subject with their religious Precepts. It must be owned there are some *Ultramontane* Doctors who have maintained this impious Principle, *That Subjects may revolt against their Princes when they are Heretics*. But these detestable Opinions have been condemned in all Nations whose Superstition hath not stifled the Sense of Honour and Religion. The Parliaments of *France* have ordered Books, containing such Principles, to be torn by the Hands of the Hangman, and the Universities have fully refuted them. To say the Truth, Princes themselves, who are so much outraged by the spreading of such Notions, have sometimes shewn no great Liking to that Zeal with which they have been condemned, which must to thee appear incomprehensible. However, hitherto *France* and *Germany* have rejected, with Horror all Doctrines tending to violate the Respect due to Sovereigns.

It is to the Love of their Subjects that many Princes owe the Preservation of their Glory. While they are absorbed in Pleasures, and seem quite to forget the high Rank they possess; *Rome*, always ambitious, and always attentive to the Means of overturning the Rights of Kings, fails not of making Attempts against their Authorities. But the People being alarmed at the first Appearance of a Novelty, big with pernicious Consequences, oppose thereby so strong a Barrier to the Ambition of the Sovereign Pontiffs, as affords Princes time to awake out of their Lethargy and to defend their Rights.

Take

Take Care of thyself, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers render thee prosperous.

Hamburgh.



L E T T E R CXXIII.

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraite, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.*

I Divert myself with considering daily the different Systems of Philosophers, without giving however intire Credit to any. I consider them all as probable, but I believe there is none without its Difficulties, and in which it is by no means hard to find weak Places, if one were inclined to attack them. I leave to a certain Race of Wrongheads that Adoration which they pretend to pay to their favourite Authors. Whatever the Reputation of a Philosopher may be, I never suffer it to draw me into a false Admiration of him. There are, in my Opinion, many Things hid from all Men, and which the modern Philosophers have not a bit better explained than the Ancients.

An *Arabian* of my Acquaintance has within these few Days lent me a Manuscript. I have read it with Attention. I find many things in it very amusing: But, upon the whole, I think there is very little Instruction to be gathered from the whole Work. The Author's Scheme is this: He pretends,

tends, that Men, Animals, and all that we see invested with Life, were produced by the Sea. The first Fault I find with this System is, that it is directly opposite to the Existence of a Deity, As I have an infinite Contempt for such blind Philosophers as are not struck with this first and apparent Truth, so you may guess that there is in this System something very pleasant and very whimsical, since notwithstanding this capital Error I could read it with any Pleasure. See then in few Words a brief Exposition of this System.

The *Arabian* Author pretends, That there hath happened insensibly a great Change in the Earth, so that what we now see dry, was heretofore covered with Water. He affirms, that the Sea and Waters wasted by Degrees, and the Earth being dried by the Heat of the Sun, did after many Ages assume much the same Form that it has at present.

This is his System with respect to the World in general. Now, let me tell you what he says in particular of Man, and other terrestrial Animals, When the Waters were consumed to a certain Degree, and of course a certain Part of the Earth lay bare, some aquatick Animals accustomed themselves, by little and little, to go and browse and feed upon the Grass; that the Man, the Ox, the Horse, &c. constantly went back at first into the Water; but, in process of Time going farther and farther from the Bank, they in the end accustomed themselves to live on the Earth. The Sun, by the Heat of his Rays, quickly altered the Texture of their Skins, and gave to some of them Hair and Hides, as we see them have. He pretends, that Habit, which is a second Nature, did in process of Time make the Issue of these aquatick Animals incapable of living any where but in the Earth. That
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in like manner, the Birds too lost the Capacity of entering the Waters, because they were not accustomed to it from the time of their being hatched, except in such as were called Sea and River Fowl; the Parents of which had never strayed far from their Mother-Element. In support of this extraordinary Doctrine, our Author reasons thus: *We see that the Sun changes intirely the Form and Colour of Men; Children are born white in the midst of Ethiopia, and the first Covering of their Heads is Hair, and not Wool. It is not till some Days after that they become black; and there is a very considerable Space intervenes before any thing like Wool appears. The Reason of this is, because Men always retain a strong Tincture of their first Quality; and that during the time Men were aquatick Animals, they were all white, and had none of them Wool in place of Hair; but since they have quitted their ancient Element, they have been changed more or less, according as the Vapours of the Earth, or the Heat of the Sun have operated upon them.*

All Animals, continues the Arab Writer, retain even to this Day some of their first Qualities. There are none of them, but what can swim and live for some time in the Water; the Cow, the Horse, the Dog, and all other Creatures swim naturally; Man would do the same thing, if Fear did not hinder Nature from exerting those Motions with which, however, she is very well acquainted. In some Seas Sea-Men are yet found; the Dutch Historians mention a Girl who was preserved a long time at Harlem about three hundred Years ago, and who was stopt upon the Shore just as she came out of the Sea. In many other Countries, Creatures have been seen half Fish, half of a human Form, all which is sufficient to shew, that the Element of Water is by no means incompatible with an organized

organized Body like to that of Man; and that there is nothing but Habit, and their being accustomed from their Birth to breathe the dry Air on Shore, which hinders Men from living in the Bottom of the Sea.

See, my dear Friend, the Scheme of this *Arabian*, who is to this Day busy in finding out Proofs of his Hypothesis. He asked me my Opinion. I told him very sincerely, that all Systems which did not admit the Existence of a Deity, and which supposed, as the first Principle of all Things, a certain Arrangement of Matter by the Hand of Chance, would fall into unsustainable Opinions, by building a Castle on the Sands, which the slightest Motion must overturn from Top to Bottom.

It is indeed a surprizing thing, that the Philosophers did not perfectly comprehend the Necessity of a Thing which the most simple People now-a-days clearly see the Truth of. The most sublime Verities, says an *English* Author*, which were scarce accessible to the brightest and best-cultivated Wits among the *Pagans*, are at present become familiar, even to the most confined Understandings. This opens a large Field of satisfactory Reflections to a Man who considers Things with the Eye of a Philosopher, and who possesses a Soul capable of being charmed at the mighty Progress which useful Knowledge hath made among Mankind.

What, my Friend, would all the *Greek* and *Roman* Philosophers say, who, after thirty or forty Years spent in Study, acquired so imperfect an Idea of the Deity? What, I repeat it, would they say, if they were to return to the World, and find every little Scholar in Philosophy able to shew them with the greatest Clearness, that God is not material, because whatsoever is corporal is subject to Division;

* The Spectator.

and:

and whatsoever can be divided, cannot be God. For then either there must be as many Gods as Parts, or the Deity must be compounded of certain Parts not divine.

The Astonishment of these Philosophers would still increase, when they were shewn how great their Error was in admitting Matter to be co-eternal with God. They would learn, that there could be nothing co-eternal with him, since he could not then be Almighty. For not having created Matter, he could not destroy it. Now, it is equally ridiculous to affirm, that a Thing which has no Beginning can have an End, or that God can exist and not be Almighty. These *Greeks* and *Romans*, of whom some boast so much, would be surprized that they themselves did not make these Reflections, or that the Prejudices imbibed in their Infancy, and strengthened by Education, should be able to hinder them from coming at such clear and easy Truths.

It is to us, it is to us, *Monceca*, that the whole World is indebted for the Knowledge of God. The first *Nazarenes*, who taught the Heathens the Unity and Spirituality of the Divinity, were *Jews* separating from our Communion. Passion has made our Brethren say a great deal of Ill of them. However, it must be allowed that they were truly great Men, who hazarded their Lives to withdraw the human Species from Idolatry; if the Unity of God hath been preached throughout the Universe, it is solely owing to them.

When I was a *Rabbi* at *Constantinople* I durst not talk in this Style. My Brethren would have looked upon me with Horror; they would have taxed me with inclining to *Nazarenism*, as if one ought not to render Justice to Merit wherever it is found;
and

and that the Difference of Belief obliges one to disguise one's Sentiments, and to despise People really worthy of Esteem. Let us, my Friend, leave this Madness to narrow Minds. It is a Conduct only worthy of Blockheads and Fanaticks; and when we see a Man of true Genius run into Invectives against People of Probity, one may boldly affirm, that it is not his Zeal for Religion, but his Ambition, Hatred, or some other Passion, which moves him thereto. When *Pascal* wrote his *Provincial Letters*, he thought less of defending *Nazarenism* than of outraging the *Jesuits*; and when those People persecuted *Arnauld*, it was the destroying of their Enemy, and not the Good of Religion that they had in View. Too many Divines who dip in Controversy, hate their Adversaries more than the Errors they maintain. It is the same thing with other Writers, when they come to differ with each other; they do not criticise a Work because it is ill written, but because it is written by an Adversary.

When I was in *Germany*, I was acquainted with two Authors who were continually praising each other. The one was the eldest Son of *Apollo*, the other the Darling and the Favourite of the Muses. After all, they fell out on account of a Piece which the one wrote, and the other, contrary to his Custom, found some fault with. This was sufficient to sow everlasting Division. They wrote against each other immediately with all the Vehemence imaginable; they published mutual Edicts of Banishment from *Parnassus*, and supported these new Sentiments of theirs in all Companies with a Petulancy not to be endured. They blamed excessively those very Pieces which they had before as much commended; nor can I conceive how they could, after saying so many handsome Things the one of the other,

other, deviate into such Scurrility and Abuse. *This Conduct*, said I to one of them, *will hurt you in the Opinion of the World. What would you have your Readers think of your Works, when they find you blaming now what you commended a while ago. They will believe, and with Reason, that you commend without Grounds, and that you censure without Cause. What signifies that*, replied the Author, *provided I can but destroy the Praises that I have formerly given the Man who has had the Confidence to blame my Writings, I am content. I praised him because he praised me, and I censure him because he censured me. If he was to write even better than he did, I will persist always in saying, that he writes nothing worth reading.*

This is the manner, dear Aaron, in which Authors generally treat each other. There are very few amongst them who commend their Brethren without Hopes of Return. In the Republick of Letters, Eulogies are a Sort of Goods in which there is always a great Trade. I believe it is pretty much the same thing in all other States; when one praises a Person, one is apt to be uneasy if he says nothing in return. Self-love is deeply wounded by that Silence which mortifies the natural Vanity of Men, and which seems to imply a mighty Superiority in him who receives, over him who bestows Panegyrick.

I believe, my Friend, that we may lay it down as a general Principle, that most Men commend from one of these two Motives; either that they may be commended, or that they may be rewarded. There are very few, who from the sole Principle of doing Justice to Merit, make it their Practice to speak well of the good Qualities of others. It is true, that generally speaking, we look upon this noble and generous Way of Proceeding, as a Virtue frequently to be met with; but if we examine Things

Things more closely, we shall find that the Number of these disinterested People is but small.

Be careful of yourself, dear *Monceca*, live content and happy, and excuse my writing to you so seldom.

Cairo.



LETTER CXXIV.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *Nazarenes* have a laudable Custom, which I cannot help blaming our Ancestors for not having observed. They go to the very Extremities of the World, in order to preach the Existence of one God, All-good, All-mighty and All-merciful. There is no Country, how barbarous, how distant soever, whither they have not gone to destroy Idols, and to insult them on their Altars. If these People used a little more softness in their manner of communicating these sublime Truths, and if their Behaviour were not in some kind inconsistent with the Doctrines which they preach, I should look upon these Missionaries as the greatest and most deserving Men in the Universe. Is there, in effect, any thing so glorious, as for Men to devote themselves intirely to the Service of an infinite Number of Persons, under the Slavery of most absurd Opinions, and plunged in.

in the frightful Abyss of Idolatry? Is there, I say, any thing more noble than to make the Delivery of such Persons the Business of one's Life?

If such as make it their Employment to enlighten these unfortunate *Pagans*, contented themselves with exerting Reason and good Sense, instead of using Force and Violence when they have it in their Power, Idolatrous Nations would much sooner be persuaded of the Existence and Unity of God. But the Cruelties which the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese* have exercised in certain Countries, and which are far from being unknown to other savage Nations, give them an extraordinary Hatred and unconquerable Aversion towards such as come to instruct them. What is it one can really imagine an *Indian* can think of those terrible Executions he hears to have been done by the Inquisition at Goa? *These Fells*, will he say to himself, *who come to inform me of a God, perfectly good, and merciful in all things, offer up daily Numbers of their Brethren to this same God, and are continually sprinkling this great Altar of his, the Earth, with the Blood of his Creatures. They most cruelly commit to the Flames, Men of the greatest Worth and Probity, because they have not Power enough over their own Minds, to force the Belief of certain Propositions which seem to them contrary to Equity and Reason.* The Fierceness and Cruelty of a Missionary in those Countries, where their Power is established, hinders the Fruit of their Arguments, even where they use no other Weapons.

You will ask me perhaps, my Friend, how it comes to pass that I, who am a *Jew*, should interest myself in the Propagation of the Faith of the *Nazarenes*? The Answer is easy and natural. It is not the Propagation of the Principles of the *Nazarene* Religion for which I am concerned, but the propagating the Knowledge of the Deity. You know

that I have always thought, as well as you, that Men might be saved in all Religions, provided they were truly virtuous. Now there is nothing so capable of leading Men to the Practice of Honesty and Virtue as the Sense of a Divine Being, provided it be not clouded, or in a manner extinguished by an insupportable Load of incomprehensible and contradictory Doctrines, and of Ceremonies equally ridiculous and vain. We ought naturally to wish the Good, and to desire the Salvation of all Mankind. We are therefore obliged to the Missionaries, who by their Preaching facilitate the saving such as are sunk in Idolatry, by teaching them the Knowledge of God and of his Will. There is no Philosopher, of what Religion soever he be, who can think otherwise, if at least he does not suffer himself to be blinded by his Prejudices, and by an unreasonable Hatred of those who are not of his own Opinion in all things.

It were to be wished, that when the *Jews* were dispersed, after *Titus* had destroyed *Jerusalem*, they had followed this Maxim of the *Nazarenes*, and had made it their Business to preach and to propagate the Law of *Moses* throughout the Universe, instead of keeping to themselves those Treasures which they received from Heaven. Had they acted thus, one can hardly conceive, that the Number of Missionaries considered, and the Beauty of that Religion adverted to, which these Missionaries were to preach; I say, a proper Weight given to these Things, one can scarce believe they could have failed persuading all the Nations in the World. What Weapons could either Ignorance or Superstition have opposed to the simple and evident Truths they would have revealed?

The more I consider my Religion, the more I am convinced that it is equally reasonable and magnificent.

nificent. One only God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, a Being infinitely wise and good, who preserves and governs the Universe by his Power, who will punish the Wicked, and who will reward the Good. The Wicked, who are they? Such as presume to do unto others what they would not bear to be done to themselves: And the Good, who are they? Such as, not content with avoiding any Injustice towards their Neighbour, practise also towards him whatsoever they wish he should practise towards them, as my Friend the *Latin Poet* happily expresses it in one Line:

Quæ tibi vis fieri, facias. Hæc summula legis.

To others do, what you from them expect,
Nor ever this the *Sum* of *Law* neglect.

Here, my Friend, is the Whole of our Religion. All its Precepts are contained within this narrow Compass. Whatever our Rabbins have added, may be considered, if you please, as useless and superfluous. What Mortal, who makes the least use of his Reason, but must acknowledge the Evidence of the Truths we declare, and give them his Assent? I repeat it again, my Friend, that if we had been possessed of a Zeal like that of the *Nazarenes*, for making known the Beauty and Sanctity of our Religion, we had certainly drawn to us a Number of Profelytes. But since our People, either through Negligence, or which is the real Truth, out of a Dislike of other Nations, hath neglected to make known to them the Deity, we ought, as Philosophers, to be charmed when we perceive that the Missionaries have supplied our Defect, and have done to Mankind that Service which we disdained to render them.

Many of the *Nazarenes* have written in sharp Terms against their Missionaries; they have reproached them on the head of their bad Conduct, and have alledged that they have frustrated thereby the good Design they went upon. These Reflections have made some hasty People conclude, that all the Missionaries have been alike wanting in their Duty. But this is giving in to an apparent Error: We may say without exaggerating, that the Good they have done very far surpasses the Evil. It is true that some Instances may be given, where Slips of theirs have destroyed the Fruits of many Years Application. However, the Crimes of particular People ought not to fall upon Missionaries in general. I own it were to be wished there had never gone to the *Indies*, or into other Countries inhabited by Idolaters, any but *French* and *German* Missionaries, bred up in Countries where the Inquisition is abhorred. For these Preachers, if we except a few of a certain Order, seldom make use of any violent Measures; and this Tendernefs of theirs, is much more useful and efficacious in the Business of their Mission, than the Fiercenefs of the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*. One of the last-mentioned Nation, whose Name was *Menezes*, made several Attempts in order to the Conversion of the Inhabitants of the Island of *Zocotora*; but the extraordinary Cruelties he had exercised amongst other People, where he was supported by the Power of the King of *Cochin*, induced these Islanders to revolt rather than receive him. *They fell into a Rage*, says a *Nazarene* Historian*, *at the very mention of their embracing the Religion of the Portuguese. Nay, they carried their Aversion so far as to protest, that they would rather suf-*

* *Essertation Historiques & Recherchés sur la Religion Chretienne dans les Indes*, p. 304.

fer Death than embrace the Opinions taught by those Missionaries, whom they stiled a perverse and infamous Race of Men.

Another Missionary, whose Name was *Alphonse Mendez*, demolished all that his Predecessors had been doing. As he was a Jesuit, his Enemies made that a Pretext to attack the Order. They published several Pieces, wherein they accused the Jesuits in general of prejudicing the Missions; but in these they exaggerated many Things, and in some others disguised the Truth not a little. To do Justice, it must be acknowledged, that the Missionaries of this Order have made a greater Progress in Countries, where before their Arrival the People had not any right Notions of the Deity, and that they commonly behave with a great deal of Tenderness. Nay, they are reproached with being but too tractable, and with having pushed beyond its proper Extent, their Complaisance for the Idolaters they had to do with. But whichever Way they take it, it is impossible for them to content all People, or to hinder their Enemies from finding fault with their Conduct. The disinterested Part, however, of their Adversaries do them Justice, and acknowledge that there have been in the *Indies*, and elsewhere, Men of their Order of great Worth and Probity. Let me quote to you what a reformed *Nazarene**, who is of course an Enemy to the Jesuits, has said upon this Subject. “Christianity
“seems more effectually settled in *China* than in
“any of the Countries where the Order hath been
“employed in planting the Faith. The Jesuits
“have had in this Mission many great Men, such

* *Dissertations Historiques & Recherchés sur la Religion Chrétienne dans les Indes*, p. 318.

“ as the Fathers *Riccus, Martinus, Schalt, Ver-*
 “ *bieß*, and very many others. It would be In-
 “ justice to refuse these great Men the Praises
 “ which are due to them. For my part, I enter
 “ not at present into the Disputes which subsist be-
 “ tween them and the other Missionaries. It may
 “ be, that the Jesuits are not altogether free from
 “ Blame; but the Conduct of their Adversaries is
 “ not however void of Passion. Do they not evi-
 “ dently shew too great a Pleasure in mortifying
 “ the Jesuits on account of the Insults they pretend
 “ to have received from them ?”

This Passage sets in its proper Light the Grounds of those Reproaches thrown out against the Jesuit Missionaries. The Hatred which is borne to their Order in *Europe*, extends itself even to those who are employed in the *Indies* in preaching the Unity of God. They reproach some with their too great Complaisance in *China*; they object to others their Cruelty, and their loading the Minds of the *Indians* too soon and too heavily with the Belief of Mysteries. Thus they condemn in the first what they would have practised by the latter, and plainly shew, that their Quarrel with the Missionaries is a mere Pretence for charging on the Jesuits all the Evils that fall out in all Places.

I must own to you, my Friend, that I have often thought they lay too many Things to the Charge of these Fathers. There scarce falls out any Mischief but they are reproached with it. I am sensible that they are vain, ambitious and revengeful; but I know too, that their Adversaries are apt to extend Things against them to extravagancy, and to load them with imaginary Crimes. One *Angelinus Gazæus*, a Jesuit, hath on this Head written some *Latin* Verses, which express very happily this Folly of attributing whatever falls out amiss, to that

Or-

Order*. The Sense of them is this :

Eve, the Jesuits believed,
They *Adam* made the Apple eat ;
Abel by Jesuits deceived,
Cain, at their Suit, his Brains out beat.

It were to be wished, that Divines had never answered in any other manner than this, to the groundless Reproaches thrown out against them : We should not then have such an enormous Load of Books, full of nothing but Complaints and ill Language. For my part, I cannot comprehend how grave People can spend their Time in writing such Heaps of Invectives ; a quick Pleasantry like this of the Jesuit, renders a false Accusation more evident and more ridiculous than a long pedantick Apology. All the Volumes that have been written against the Jesuits never gave them so much Trouble as the *Provincial Letters*, where *Pascal* has continually in mind *Horace's* Maxim,

. *Ridiculum acri*
Fortius & melius magnas plerumque secat res.

If *Pascal* had refuted the *Spanish* Divines with all the Pomp of the Schools, the *Jesuits* had not failed, in their Turns, to have sent abroad a Number of Books in Defence of their Brethren. They would in this Case have done no more than mutually embarrass the Subject on which they writ ; and after fatiguing themselves and the Publick, with a Mul-

* The *Latin* Verses run thus :
Pomum Marito, Jesuitis credulo,
Porrexit Eva, Jesuitis credula :
Fratrem Cainus, Jesuitis credulus,
Occidet Abel, Jesuitis credulum.

titude of Pieces on the one Side, and on the other, which, however, none but themselves or their Friends would have particularly examined; the thing had rested there, and the generality of the World known no more than when they began to write. But the Thing stands now in a quite contrary State; the ingenious but malicious Method taken by *Pascal*, hath in six Months time made that evident to all *Europe*, of which all its Universities could not convince the Publick in a hundred Years.

Take care of yourself, my Friend, live happy and contented, and may our God bestow on you great and lasting Posterity.

Hamburg.



LETTER CXXV.

AARON MONCECA, to JACOB BRITO.

YOUR Letters upon the *Spanish* Nation, my dear *Brto*, gave me infinite Pleasure, and I wish from my Heart, that those which I write you, may prove as useful and as agreeable. I concur with you in your Reflections; they are sensible and just. One only appears to me contrary to the Law of Nature, and contrary to that Equality which a Philosopher allows to all Mankind. You censure a Custom which the *Nazarene* Pontiffs approved in a certain Assembly*, and which allows a Man, in whatsoever State born, Freedom of Choice in a

* Council of *Trent*.

Wife.

Wife. You say, that such a Permission as this, is contrary to paternal Authority, destructive of that Order which ought to be observed in all States, and of the Subordination which ought to subsist in all Places, for the Good of Society. I must own to you, that in this I am not at all of your mind, but on the contrary, admire the Wisdom and Prudence of these *Nazarenes*, who, conscious that all Men were the Children of one Father, did not think proper to authorize those chimerical Distinctions, which, in process of time, Pride, Sin, and Vanity have introduced. Besides, what is it to the Good of the State, whether a particular Person be a little more, or a little less rich, provided these Riches remain in the Society? Nay, to speak the Truth, the more equally they are parted, so much the more will Trade flourish. Equality among Citizens is the very Basis of Commerce. In such States as have a Nobility aggrandized by extraordinary Privileges, Trade is more cramped than in others. In order to prove this Fact, we need but compare the Riches of particular Persons amongst the *Dutch* and *English* with the *French* and *Germans*. This will be sufficient to shew us what mighty Benefits a People reap by cherishing this Equality, and by refusing to introduce those Distinctions which break the Harmony of Society, and by exalting the Spirits of particular Persons, mortify at the same time others, so as to deprive them of that Quickness, Boldness and Penetration which is necessary to render them successful in Trade.

I can by no means think, that Custom which prevails among the *French*, the Right of dissolving those Marriages which they are pleased to stile unequal, and thereby separating two Persons whom Love has united, and who, in the Presence of the Deity, have sworn eternal Tenderneſs to each other.

This is a Species of Tyranny which is a Remnant of those too exalted Privileges which the *Romans* extended heretofore to the Fathers of Families. These Laws in favour of paternal Authority have drawn along with them great Inconveniencies, and by giving to the Heads of Houses an absolute Ascendancy over their Families, have exposed many reasonable Beings to the Caprice of one. In vain the old *Roman Lawyers* set up the Tenderness of Fathers, as an Excuse for vesting in them this extravagant Power. Fathers, as well as their Children, are subject to all the Passions, and all the Frailties of human Nature. How often do we see them hate their Children without Reason, and foolishly dissipate the Estates which they ought to leave to them? How often do we see them sacrifice their Families to their Ambition? And how frequently may we discern in their Opposition to their Families, in a certain Way, a secret Jealousy lest their Children should be happier than themselves?

I believe, my Friend, that the Duties between Parents and Children are reciprocal. This is the Sentiment of a *French Poet* *. Let me cite a couple of Verses which he puts into the Mouth of a distressed Son.

O cruel Parents! Are not your Rights ours?
 The Ties of Duty, are not they too yours?
 These then shou'd bind, or those shou'd sure be void;
 Both must subsist, or both must be destroy'd.

The *Romans* discovered in the End how detrimental to Society this too great Extent of paternal Authority really proved; in consequence of this, they reduced it into narrower Bounds, and took away the Power over Life and Death. Alas! how

* Crebillon, in his *Tragedy of Radamistus and Zenobia*.
 great

great the Folly, to permit so long that a whole Family should be abandoned to the Will of a single Man, who too frequently made an ill Use of his Power?

In order to have a proper Idea of this wrong Use which Parents may make of a Right over the Lives of their Offspring, we need only re-call to our Memory that Custom which prevailed over the *Greeks*, of exposing their Children. Where, in this Case, was that paternal Tenderneſs ſo boaſted of by the Lawyers? What Strefs can be laid on a Diſpoſition which we ſee may be ſo far diſpenſed with as to ſacrifice the Life of a poor Child, purely to gratify Avarice or Ambition, by affording a larger Portion to a Child already brought up? Do we not at this Day ſee among the *Nazarenes* many Examples of the Harſhneſs of Parents? How many hapleſs Daughters are ſacrificed in order to enrich an eldeſt Son? They are without Pity condemned to perpetual Imprisonment, and under the ſpecious Appellation of *Nun*, languish in Captivity during Life. Are not theſe, my Friend, moſt ſenſible Marks of paternal Tenderneſs? Can you, after this, think that the natural Affection of Men is a proper Foundation for Law, or that any Dependence can be had on that innate Tenderneſs which ſome Declaimers have magnified with all the Pomp of Eloquence?

I am confident, my dear *Jacob*, that a Law which ſhould place Children intirely in the power of their Fathers, would at leaſt be as unreaſonable as a Law which gave Children a Power over their Fathers. In a well-regulated State, the Power of the one, and the Obedience of the other, ought to be fixed. Even the moſt neceſſary Laws ought to have Limits. I am convinced that the Head of a Family ought to have all the Authority neceſſary to

inspire with Virtue, and to regulate the Manners of his Descendants. But I can by no means agree, that if he should forget to be a Father, he should still retain a Power of punishing a Number of innocent Persons, to whom he imputes no Crime, but the natural Desire of freeing themselves from an insupportable Yoke.

When one considers attentively the Reasons which generally induce Parents to cross the Inclinations of their Children in Marriage, one discovers their Source either in Caprice or in Ambition. I have shewn you, my Friend, that it is not just to subject many to the Fancy of one. I believe I have also offered you Reasons sufficient, to prove that Equality amongst Citizens contributes to the Good of Society. If to these, you will add the Reflections of a Philosopher, who not content with regarding all Mankind as Equals, sets a greater Price on the Satisfaction of the Mind than on all the Treasures of the Universe. All these things, I say, considered, I flatter myself you will not persist in censuring that Decision of the *Nazarene* Pontiffs, which solemnly declares, that Men have no Right to invalidate such Marriages as are contracted with the free Consent of both Parties.

Marriages founded in Affection are the most happy. Love, says an *English* Author *, ought to have shot its Roots deep, and to have been well grown before we enter into that State. There is nothing which more nearly concerns the Peace of Mankind than the having a thorough Knowledge of those with whom they converse. If this be so, how strong a Reason is it for a Husband, being well acquainted with the Qualities of a Woman with whom he is to pass the rest of his Days? It is on his Choice in this respect, that his Happiness or Misery for Life de-

* The Spectator,

pend.

pend. One may say of Marriage what *Virgil* said of Hell;

With mighty ease, we downwards find the Way
To Hell; the Gates are open Night and Day:
But oh! how hard and difficult to tread
The Paths to heavenly Light which upward lead?

But when once we are in, there is no Remedy left but Patience. How well ought we to examine an Action which hath such important Consequences, and how evidently unjust to deprive a Man of his Liberty in respect to a Thing which so nearly concerns him? When the Choice of a Husband or Wife is left to Parents, they have nothing in view but the Blessings and Advantages of this World; whereas the Persons, who are themselves interested, regard mostly personal Merit. The first would procure all the Ease and Pleasures of Life for the Person whose Interest they espouse, in hopes that in all Situations these Advantages may be serviceable to them. The latter fix their Thoughts on a continual Bliss.

You see, my Friend, the different Sentiments whereon the Fathers of Families and their Children act. I leave you to judge which is most reasonable. To me it appears, that Satisfaction of Mind is of more Value than the Empire of the Universe, with respect to a Person who desires to live happy and at Ease. The *Turks* have a much wiser Maxim in this respect than the *French*. They permit their Children to chuse, if they think fit, from among their Slaves; they regard not in their Alliances either Riches or Ambition, when Love stands in the Way. The *Jews*, on the contrary, resemble the *Nazarenes*, who reject the Decision of their Pontiffs; they even go farther, for they settle the Fate of their Children in their Infancy. They contract them
I before

before they are at Years of Discretion; and I confess, I know not how it comes to pass, that our Brethren are not more unlucky in their Marriages than we generally observe them to be.

A Father, who forms a Project of marrying his Son on the mere Score of Interest, can he possibly know any thing of the Humour or Character of her he designs for his Daughter-in-law, when perhaps he is scarce acquainted with her Person? In truth, my Friend, I cannot but blame these sort of Bargains, believing that Affection, Tenderness and Sympathy are the proper Bands which tie in Marriage.

I observe in *France*, and in many other Countries, that a Peasant is much happier than a Man of superior Rank; because the former may dispose of his Heart as he pleases; but the latter being a Slave to Birth, must on that account stifle his Affection. The Examination of her Dignity must precede all respect for her good Qualities in the Woman to whom he inclines; and it must be his first Care not to derogate from his Nobility, in finding any thing amiable in a Person beneath him. So many Precautions must render a Man miserable. It is natural to avoid Constraint; and therefore I have no Idea of an imaginary Advantage which deprives me of real ones.

Great Men have always elevated themselves on this head above the Vulgar of their Rank. When they have found themselves invaded by the Power of Love, they have not failed to marry as their Passion directed. They have never thought themselves obliged to stoop to ridiculous Customs; but have raised to an Equality with themselves, such as Love told them were worthy of that Elevation. One of the first Monarchs of the World *, distinguished

* Peter Alexowitz, Czar of Moscow.

alike

alike by the Extensiveness of his Genius and his Dominions, gave a Place on his Throne to a Woman of the meanest Birth. His Glory was far from suffering any Diminution thereby; the World having admired his Capacity as a Prince, contemplated his Conduct with Pleasure, as the Head of his Family, and found nothing inconsistent with that Grandeur he stood possessed of, considered in one Light, and the Tenderness with which he had acted in the other.

I have insisted long enough, dear *Brito*, on this Subject; I would by no means force you to adopt my Sentiments, if you judge them unreasonable, but if what I have said appears well founded, then I shall imagine I have not done amiss in arguing against your Opinion. Till then I shall remain in a kind of Uncertainty. For though I can by no means approve placing a boundless Authority in Parents, yet I shall be very diffident as to my own Judgment, if I find that a Person endowed with so much Wit and good Sense as you are, inclines to an opposite Way of thinking. There are none but Pedants, and the *Roman Pontiffs*, who pretend to Infallibility. Philosophers and Men of Sense are always afraid of falling into Errors. They are too well acquainted with the Weakness of human Understanding not to be apprehensive of tripping sometimes, in spite of all their Care. Many have pushed their Modesty too far, and have run into a kind of Pyrrhonism to express their Humility. I cannot help thinking it a little extraordinary, that *Socrates* should say after thirty Years Study, *That he knew only One Thing, which was, that he knew Nothing* *. Methinks it was a long time to meditate, in order to be the Author at last of such a Saying.

* *Id unum scio, quod nihil scio.*

May

May you, dear *Brito*, live always contented and satisfied.

Hamburgh.



LETTER CXXVI.

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraites*, heretofore a Rabbi
at Constantinople, to AARON MON-
CECA.

THE Letter, my dear *Monceca*, which you wrote me on the different Sects of the *Nazarenes*, hath inclined me to reflect a little on those which formerly divided the Religion of our Ancestors. It seems to me that there is no Religion, which once thoroughly established, does not, at the same time that it shoots its Roots downwards, demonstrate its Strength also, by striking out its Branches upwards. In the Beginning these Sects are but a kind of Sprigs, or Suckers; by degrees they swell, and at length acquire a Bigness proportionable to the Trunk from whence they sprung. As they grow and gather Strength, they digress farther and farther from the Doctrines of their Mother Church. The Chief of each Sect forms his System but by little and little, and his Disciples again add many Things thereto.

It is always gradually, and Step by Step, that Innovators condemn the received Religion. If they at once meddled with Fundamentals, they would fright rather than persuade People. There is a Necessity of preparing them, by smaller Alterations, for the Reception of Novelties of a larger Size.

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The *Sadducees*, at their first Appearance, went no further than the *Caraites* of our Days. They contented themselves with rejecting the Traditions of the Ancients, and stuck close to the written Law. The *Pharisees*, a sort of Folks as fond heretofore of Chimæras as *my quondam* Brethren the Rabbins are at this Day, and zealous Maintainers of a thousand ridiculous Traditions, were directly opposite to the *Sadducees*. However, thus far the latter were in the right, and admitted nothing but what was reasonable. But quickly after, the Love of Novelty, and the Pleasure of straying in Paths far from those of their Adversaries, drew them into unsustainable Notions. Of *Caraites* they became Infidels and Blasphemers, and thereby gave their Enemies, the *Pharisees*, as great Advantages over them as they themselves were possessed of in the Beginning. They denied the Resurrection of the Body and the Existence of Angels; they maintained, that the Soul was mortal, and that there was no spiritual Being but God alone*. By this pernicious System, they opened a Door to all Sorts of Crimes, the Fear of Punishments, and the Hope of Rewards hereafter, being the Ties by which common People are bound to Virtue. It is true they did acknowledge God created the Universe, and that he governed it by his Providence; but then they were of Opinion, that he neither punishes nor rewards, save in this World only.

Let me intreat you, my Friend, to examine the several Sects now subsisting among the *Nazarenes*, and you will find them come very near in their Sentiments to those which were formerly among the *Jews*. The *Sadducees* in *Judea* were what the Deists now are at *Paris*, of whom you have written

* Joseph. Antiquitat. lib. xviii. cap. 2. & de Bello Judaico, lib. vi. cap. 12.

me so much formerly in your Letters, and their Belief, as you must observe, nearly the same*. I would not, however, push this Parallel too far, because I know that the true Deists, that is to say, such as have a proper Veneration for the Divinity, do not reject the Doctrine of a future State †.

But let us pursue this Parallel between the *Jewish* and *Nazarene* Sects. That of the *Pharisees* still subsists, and is indeed become the Standard of Belief among the modern *Jews*, if we except my Brethren the *Caraites*, and a few *Samaritans*; for I look upon all such as profess themselves Votaries to the *Talmud*, and the Traditions of the Rabbins, as Descendants of the *Pharisees*. From the Destruction of the Temple this Sect hath swallowed up all the others. The *Jews* in general have unhappily received all its Reveries; so that a thousand ridiculous Chimæras, under the Name of Traditions, have in a manner annulled the Holy Scriptures.

I sigh, dear *Monceca*, in the Bitterness of Soul, when I consider, that except a small Number of *Caraites*, all our Nation have embraced the grossest Errors. Their Religion, as it now stands, is an Edifice built entirely on the Traditions of the *Pharisees*, and not at all on the Books of the Law. You are well enough acquainted with the Fierceness and Pride of those ancient Doctors. They looked upon themselves as infinitely more holy than other People, and on this account separated themselves from those whom they stiled Sinners or profane Persons, with whom they would not so much as eat or drink. It was from hence that they derived their Name of *Pharisees*, which, as you know, comes from the Word *Pharos*, which signifies to separate. They carried, however, their Point by their Hy-

* Tom. 1. Let. 4.

† See the Writings of the Baron of *Gherbury*.

pocriſy

pocrify in deceiving the People, who are generally the Dupes of such as put on an exterior Shew of Sanctity.

I find, my dear *Monceca*, a mighty strong Resemblance between the old *Pharisees* and the modern *Jansenists*, as you paint them out. These last pique themselves exactly like the first on their great Austerity, and endeavour to distinguish themselves by extraordinary, shall I call them, or their odd Actions. They have the same Veneration for their *Austin*, that the *Pharisees* have for their Traditions, or their Successors, the Rabbins, have at this Day for the *Talmud*. They are Cheats, Hypocrites, Impostors, and know perfectly well, especially the Women amongst them, how to deceive the Populace by a fair Outside. They make a mighty Parade of the Severity of their Morals, which hinders not, however, their supposing the *Epines*, the *Hemorrhoids*, *She-Saints*, and the *Abbé Paris* a He-one. In one word, I find them but too like the *Pharisees*.

The *Essenes*, who, among the ancient *Jews* were perhaps the only true Observers of the Law, had Opinions very different from those of the other Sects. They led a Life far more rigid, but at the same time far more sage than any of their Countrymen; but notwithstanding this, there was not a Spice of Hypocrisy in their Conduct. They were Men truly virtuous, whose Moderation and Self-denial must appear exemplary, even in the Eyes of Philosophers. It is true they ran into some very odd Doctrines. They admitted absolute Predestination, looked upon Man as a Slave, denied his Free-will, and left him no Liberty in his Actions. They differed also from the *Pharisees* about the great Articles of a future State and the Resurrection of the Dead. For tho' they believed the former, they denied the latter, maintaining, that Souls, when they left their Bodies, entered

entered instantly into a State of Immortality, remaining eternally happy or eternally miserable, according to their Actions here, without ever being joined again to their own, or to any other Bodies *.

There are many Nazarenes, who maintain at this Day the last-mentioned Opinions of the *Essenes*, and who believe there is no Purgatory, notwithstanding what is said on that Subject by other *Nazarenes*. They say, that when the Soul escapes from the Captivity it suffers in the Body, it enters into a State of eternal Happiness or eternal Misery. There are not a few who admit absolute Predestination; and in short, all who are called Reformed throughout *Europe*, resemble in many respects the *Essenes*.

There was yet another Sect among the *Jews*, who were styled the *Contemplative* or *Therapeutæ* †. Those who embraced their Opinions, said, that it was a Motion of the divine Love which threw them into a sort of Enthusiasm, not unlike that of the *Bacchantes* and the *Corybantes*, in their Celebration of their Mysteries among the ancient Pagans. This Fit lasted till they fell into a kind of Contemplation, during which they were in an Ecstasy. Thenceforward, they looked upon themselves as raised above other Men. These People often retired into Deserts, leaving their Relations and Friends, in order to deliver themselves up entirely to seraphick Joys.

It is easy to find these *Therapeutæ* among the Mystics of our Days. The Monks, who leave the World and retire into Deserts, that they may have nothing to disturb them in their Contemplation, resemble them strongly. The Fanaticks, or the Enlightened, as they call themselves, are also of this

* *Prideaux's* Connection.

† *Philo de vitâ contemplativâ*, p. 668. edit. Colon. Cast.

Cast. They believe, as those People did, that they have received the Spirit in a supernatural Way; that it entirely possesses them, that they are guided by it in all Things, and consequently justified by it.

You see, dear *Monicca*, that I had Reason to maintain there was scarce a *Nazarene* Sect, in which might not be discovered somewhat of the Leaven of some one of those which anciently prevailed among the *Jews*. In this manner, the Opinions of Men succeed each other. After being proscribed for a certain Space of time, they again revive, and find again new Partizans.

There was in *Judea*, a little before the Destruction of that Kingdom, a certain Sect who called themselves *Herodians*, and who took Rise from *Herod the Great*. This Sect subsists at this Day in all Courts. The Errors of these consists in following blindly the Will of their Prince, and in thinking that Party always in the right which has a superior Force on its Side. *Herod* followed this Principle in his own Practice. *Josephus* *, a celebrated Historian of our Nation, though too much despised by us, informs us, that this Prince, to make his Court to the *Romans*, did many Things which were not only forbidden by, but were directly contrary to the Spirit of our Laws. Nay, he digressed so far from the right Road, as to build Temples and to erect Statues for Idolatrous Worship, which abominable Crimes he excused by the Obligation he lay under of keeping on good Terms with the *Romans*. His Followers adopted his Maxims; and the Courtiers, those eternal Idolaters of a Monarch's Favour, were almost to a Man of this Sect; which was thoroughly despised by the more virtuous *Jews*, and is even now held in Abomination, notwithstanding the Distance of Time, by all such as have

* *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. cap. 12.*

a true Sense of Religion; and prefer the Service of God to a vain and fleeting Glory. See, my Friend, how a *Nazarene* Author has treated these *Herodians*. "I believe they were like *Herod*, but half *Jews*;" "Men who made Profession indeed of that Religion, but could, upon Occasion, accommodate themselves to the *Pagan* Idolatry, and do whatever was demanded of them. The *Sadducees*, who believed there was no Life after this, ran almost unanimously into that Opinion, insomuch that they came afterwards to be confounded with that Sect*."

One may, *Monceca*, boldly venture to affirm, that the Belief of the Prince determines that of his Courtiers in general, and influences in time that of his People. In effect, it is next to an Impossibility that the Religion of the Sovereign should not in time destroy and absorb the rest. Would it not have been sufficient to have turned all *France* Protestants, if *Henry IV.* had continued in that Religion? Had it been so, I am persuaded there would have been fewer Papists in *Paris*, than there are now of the Reformed. For it is impossible, that in the Course of four or five Generations, there should not in every Family be a Chief, desirous of Honours, Offices, and such-like Marks of Distinction. Ambition, in proportion, reigns equally among Great and Small. In order to make a Fortune easily, a Man must be of the Religion of his Prince. This is an excellent Reason in its Favour, and an Argument very prevalent with the greatest Part of Mankind.

In order to demonstrate the Truth of this Fact, we need only consider what is become of the Popish Religion in the North, and it will presently convince us, that the Religion of the Prince will abso-

* *Prideaux's* Connection.

lutely,

lutely, in time, swallow up the rest: If the Successors of *Herod* had all of them thought as he did, the *Jewish* Religion would soon have been half extinguished. The *Pharisees* themselves would have gone over to his Sect; for they had too much Pride and Vanity not to desire a Share in the Royal Favour. Those who express a great deal of Zeal for an Opinion, are not the least likely to change it. I have seen many *Nazarenes* who have writ with much Heat in Defence of a Doctrine which Interest or Honours hath afterwards tempted them to desert; while ignorant People, and Men of a middling Capacity have suffered with invincible Constancy in Defence of their Behaviour. It is not very difficult to gain the Doctors of the *Sorbonne*, in case it become necessary to establish any new Opinion in *France*. By the means of Benefices, the Sovereign has in his hand the Keys of the Clergy's Heart. If the *Jansenists* could obtain Preferments to the full Extent of their Desires, they would certainly make less Noise than they do. But the *Molinists* take all, which will never bring both Parties to an Agreement.

Mayest thou enjoy, dear *Monceca*, Health, Wealth and Prosperity.

Cairo.

LETTER



L E T T E R CXXVII.

JACOB BRITO, to AARON MONCECA.

THE Superstition of the *Portuguese*, my dear *Monceca*, puts me in mind of that ancient Severity with which our Forefathers kept the Sabbath. There was a Time when that Superstition was pushed so far, that the *Jews*, by a false Delicacy of Conscience, durst not defend their Lives upon that Day. If they were attacked, they rather suffered themselves to be slain than they would avoid it by Resistance. In the Beginning of the Wars under the *Maccabees*, the Folly and Inconvenience of this Conduct became manifest by its mischievous Consequences. Men, of Sense, who saw clearly that the divine Law could not enjoin any thing apparently destructive of Society, decided, that the fourth Commandment did not forbid the defending of their Lives when they were attacked, or found themselves in Danger. In thus explaining the Commandment, they certainly came nearer to its true Sense; but still their Explication wanted Scope. For after all, they imagined that they were only to resist in case of an Attack, and that even this Decision did not give them a Power of impeding any preparative Steps towards the Ruin of the Publick, or Destruction of any private Persons; but only a Permission to defend themselves at the last Extremity. Thus it fell out, that if the *Jews* were attacked upon the Sabbath-day, they made a vigorous Resistance; but if they were besieged in a Town,

Town, they did not think it lawful to hinder the raising of Mounts or of Batteries. They durst not so much as make a Sally in order to drive the Enemy from an advantageous Post, because in this Case they would have been Aggressors; and, except in a Point of the last Extremity, they held it a Thing absolutely unlawful to oppose Force by Force.

It was this false Delicacy, in a great Measure, which gave *Pompey* an Opportunity of taking the Temple. He soon perceived the Nature of the *Jewish* Discipline, and instead of making Attacks on the Sabbath-Days, he employed them entirely in perfecting his Works, in raising Batteries, filling up Ditches and erecting Machines; from which Change of Conduct he found all the good Effects he could desire. His Soldiers did their Business so well and so commodiously, that at length they fapped a great Tower, which falling, drew after it a considerable Part of the Wall. The Breach thus made, they mounted and carried the Place by Assault. Thus the Temple was taken and sacked through the blind Superstition of those who should have defended it.

Whatever our Rabbins may say, my dear *Monceca*, I shall never be brought to believe, that the Divinity can expect from Men a Compliance with a Law, hurtful or prejudicial to Society. The Light of Nature shews us, that the Deity intends the Happiness of Mankind, and that the Rules he has given us for our Conduct have all that Tendency. We ought therefore to reject in the Celebration of the Sabbath, whatever may render it hurtful; and since from the Time of the *Maccabees* it has been admitted, that Resistance in Cases of extreme Necessity is lawful, we ought likewise to conclude, that we are permitted to do any thing which may be needful on that Day to prevent the Snares laid by our Enemies from taking Effect.

The *Nazarenes* act, in this respect, more wisely than the *Jews*. They have their Sabbath-Day as well as we, but they do not observe that Day in such a Manner as to render it hurtful. They do not apprehend that the Service of God obliges them to permit, by a blameable Indolence, the Destruction of his Temple and Altars. The *Nazarenes* say likewise, that in certain Laws the Letter kills, but the Spirit giveth Life; and that they are always to be explained in such a rational manner, as that the Divine Commands may coincide with the Measures requisite for the publick Good. Necessity may dispense with many things. It were to be wished that our Ancestors had thought as reasonably on the Head of the Sabbath, as our Brethren do in the Country where I live. They are not circumcised, they eat Pork, go to the *Nazarene* Churches, sing Vespers, and if it be necessary, say Mass; yet remain nevertheless good *Jews* in their Hearts. Of what Use would a false and foolish Zeal be, which would serve only to ruin entirely the Remains of our unfortunate Nation in these Parts? I heartily disapprove a fierce and haughty Behaviour on certain Occasions. It is more allowable to be a little negligent, or even to be wanting to our Duty with respect to one Precept, than to hazard an Inability of fulfilling the rest.

It is not because I have not a proper Admiration of that Constancy which appeared in the Behaviour of our Ancestors that I reason thus; I own I am struck with it: But what then? I cannot approve of it. What Mortal Man but must be astonished, when he considers their Firmness? *Josephus* and other Historians have preserved a full Account thereof, and transmitted it to Posterity. The *Nazarene* Authors do them all imaginable Justice. See how an *English* Writer speaks of the Conduct of our Forefathers at the time *Pompey* sacked the Temple.

“ During

“ During all this Distress, says he, amidst the Cries
 “ and the Disorders naturally attending these Bar-
 “ barities, the Priests still continued in the Temple,
 “ and still discharged the Duties of their Functions;
 “ they persisted in them with wonderful Calmness
 “ and Steadiness of Mind, notwithstanding the
 “ Rage of their Enemies, and notwithstanding the
 “ Anguish of Soul they must feel at seeing their
 “ Relations and Friends die before their Eyes, chu-
 “ sing to fall by the Swords of their Enemies, who
 “ were now Masters of all, rather than abandon
 “ the Service of their God. Many of them went
 “ to mingle their Blood with that of the Sacrifices
 “ which they offered, and by the Sword of the
 “ *Heathens* became Victims to their Duty. *Pom-*
 “ *pey* himself could not help admiring this Firm-
 “ ness, this Constancy, to which scarce any Paral-
 “ lel can be found *.”

Whatever Contempt other Nations may have for
 ours, I believe, I may affirm, my Friend, without
 Breach of Truth, that never any People gave more
 convincing Marks of Bravery than we have done in
 fighting against our Enemies, or have shewn greater
 Veneration for the Deity. It is true that we have
 sometimes failed; but who are they to whom the
 same Objection may not be made? For a Nation
 never to be deficient in any Point of Duty, we must
 suppose it composed of Men void of human Frailty.
 Where are they to be met with who have resisted
 such Persecutions as we have felt, without sinking
 under the Weight of their Misfortunes? We how-
 ever remain uncrushed. We have sustained with a
 Patience worthy of the greatest Admiration, all the
 Punishments that have been inflicted upon us. We
 are, as it were, Vagabonds throughout the Earth,
 proscribed in many Parts of the World, and forced to

* *Prideaux's* Connection.

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pay

pay for the very Air we breathe, in Places which afford us a Retreat: Evils, capable of destroying even the Constancy of a Stoick. Yet in the midst of these Distresses, scarce one in an Age can be found amongst us who abandons his Belief, and proves a Traitor to his God.

The *Nazarenes*, who blame without distinction all our Actions, even such as deserve the highest Commendation, give the Name of Wrongheadedness to our Constancy, instead of doing Justice to our Firmness. Their Hatred toward us makes them so blind, that they make Crimes even of our Virtues. I should be glad if they would inform me, how that which in themselves they stile Grandeur of Soul and Fidelity to Providence, comes to be in us Obstinacy and Hardness of Heart? Inasmuch as we are thoroughly persuaded of the Truth of our Religion, and believe as firmly as they do, why are we more wrongheaded than they? Obstinacy is that Vice which engages a Man to defend his Opinion, even after he is convinced of its Falshood. But there can be nothing more unworthy of an honest Man than to change his Sentiments in religious Matters, purely out of Complaisance. It is becoming like certain Idolaters in the *Indies*, who make a Trade of their Religion in their Negotiations with the *Nazarene* Missionaries; they abandon the Worship of their Idols while the Fathers furnish them with a better Subsistance than otherwise they could obtain; but whenever they are turned out of their Pay, away they run to their Woods, and to their false Gods again.

Consider, my dear *Mônica*, the several Sects of the *Nazarenes*, which have sprung up in the Space of seventeen hundred Years, they are almost all extinct. One Age hath seen a Religion rise and fall, which yet in its Day had a Multitude of Partizans. In this springing and decaying of Religions, ours hath suffered

fered no Diminution. I am persuaded there are at this Day as many *Jews* scattered over the Earth as there were in the World at the time of the last Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*. It seems that Heaven is alike employed in multiplying them and their Misfortunes. If all the *Jews* who are in the Countries of the *Great Mogul*, in *Muscovy*, in *Turkey*, in *Africa*, and in the several Kingdoms of *Europe*, were assembled in one Country, I doubt whether there would be a more numerous or a more puissant Nation in the Earth. This shall one Day happen, dear *Monceca*, when the long Captivity, under which we now languish, shall have its final Period. The Walls of *Jerusalem* shall be rebuilt by her Children, the Holy Temple again restored, and the Almighty worshipped therein by his faithful *Israelites*, in the same manner as heretofore. Let the *Nazarenes* then go on to boast their own Prosperity, and to upbraid us with our Misfortunes. He who hath brought us into this Slavery, and hath made us stoop to the Yoke of these Nations, can deliver us when he pleases, and when our Crimes shall be expiated, then the *Nazarenes* shall begin to feel the Punishment of theirs.

We may apply to our Enemies what an *English* Governor once said to a *French* General when *England* was deprived of *Calais*, the last of the numerous Conquests it had made in *France*. The General asked the Governor pleasantly, *When do you think you shall pass the Water, and establish yourselves again here?* *That we shall do*, replied the Governor gravely, *whenever your Sins are greater than ours*. If this Gentleman was right in his Conjecture, then towards the latter End of the Reign of *Lewis XIV.* the *French* were greater Sinners than the *English*. It is true that Heaven at last pardoned them, and their Enemies quickly passed the Sea again. It shall be,

dear *Monceca*, with the *Jews* as with the *Nazarenes*; whenever they become virtuous, God will put an End to their Sufferings. All the different Captivities that we have endured, are but the Effects of our Vices, and as these have not produced an Amendment, God hath thought fit to continue our Afflictions, that he may change intirely our evil Inclinations, and render us worthy of being called by his Name. The longer our Slavery lasts, the more agreeable its End will be. In vain have the Nations conspired the Ruin of *Israel*; their Projects shall be all disappointed; the Almighty shall dissipate their dark Contrivances as the Wind drives Smoke away. When our Deliverer shall come to break our Chains, the Earth shall tremble at his Presence, and Kings shall fall down at his Feet; he shall overcome all Obstacles, and *Sion* shall be restored, and become more flourishing than of old. Happy! Happy! *Monceca*, shall the *Jews* be who shall then enjoy the Light of the Sun; they shall see in one Day more Miracles done than have been hitherto wrought from the Creation of the World. They shall contemplate the Face of the most august *Messiah*, resplendent with Glory. Perhaps that Day is nearer than we imagine. The Deliverer of *Israel* may appear in an Instant; it is also possible that happy Moment may be far off. God alone knows when it shall come to pass. Let us submit with all due respect to his Decrees. Let us adore his holy Providence, and let us be assured, that if he punishes us, it is for our Good, and that in the End he may bring us to Glory.

Mayest thou enjoy thy Health, dear *Monceca*, live happily and content, and may the God of our Fathers grant thee Prosperity in all things.

Lisbon.

LETTER



L E T T E R CXXVIII.

AARON MONCECA, to JACOB BRITO.

I HAVE many times considered what it was which could render some Nations so much more affable than others. I am at length persuaded, that it is simply Education; and that it is purely the Instructions we give Children in their tender Years, which determines their future Temperament, and inspires them with that Politeness which is of so great Consequence to Society.

Some Authors, moderately furnished with Understanding, have maintained, that those are the most polished who dwell in Countries subject to absolute Monarchs*. If we may credit these Men, Brutality is a kind of necessary Consequence of Liberty. They compare the Politeness of the *French*, with that Quickness and Haughtiness visible in the *English*, and that plain natural Behaviour, which is the Characteristick of the *Dutch* and *Swiss*. But the Examples these Authors make use of, in order to sustain their Opinions, are absolutely destroyed by others; which very plainly prove, that the Liberty of a Nation does not at all prejudice Affability, or Complaisance. The *Greeks* and *Romans*, while their several Republicks were in the greatest Splendor,

* See amongst other things, *Lettres sur les Hollandois*, said to be written by Mr. Muralt.

were the People in the World the most civilized, the most polite; while the *Persians* and the *Parthians*, Slaves to absolute Princes, were considered as Barbarians.

If we compare the Affability of the *Venetians* with the unmannerly Behaviour of the *Turks*, we shall readily agree, that despotick Government is far enough from inspiring Politeness; we must look therefore for this Cause somewhere else, than in either Submission or Liberty. For as we see, that some free People have little Complaisance, and that under despotick Governments there may be found some who have less; and as it is certain, that the *Muscovites* were heretofore the most restiff and the most brutal of all People, at the very time that they were absolutely Slaves; we must acknowledge that the Idea we are apt to form of a Ferocity arising from a Spirit of Liberty, is not at all founded in Reason, but in Prejudice: Wherefore we ought to continue our Search.

I think, and that with reason, dear *Brita*, that Education is the ruling Motive in most of the Actions of Mankind; they have been more or less tractable, according as they have been more or less cultivated in their Youth: When they have been taught early to render themselves sociable, to bend their Tempers, and to accommodate their Wills to those of others, it grows into a Custom, and they become insensibly complaisant without thinking of being so. In short, Habit is to them a second Nature. But when, on the contrary, they are brought up in a full Gratification of their Passions, and allowed to follow blindly their own Humours, their Temper becomes more and more restive, and they grow the more and more impertinent as they grow in Years; the Nature of the Government they

they live under, neither abating nor encreasing the Rusticity of their Manners.

The *Muscovites* are not become more submissive within these twenty Years, and they are become more polite. *Peter Alexowitz* found the Secret of polishing their Manners and abolishing their ill Customs, without making them Slaves. He made them more sociable, by obliging them to educate their Children in a proper manner. The *Muscovite* Court differs as much from what it was twenty Years ago, as the Court of *France* differs from that of *Constantinople*; and yet I look upon these Courts as Antipodes to each other in this respect.

The *Muscovites* were heretofore less polished and less affable than the *Turks*, absolutely ignorant of the Laws of Civility, and very moderately skilled in those of Nations. The Character of Ambassador was scarce enough considered amongst them to preserve him who bore it from Indignities. *Wicquefort*, in his Treatise of the Ambassador and his Functions, speaks of them in these Terms:

“ The *Muscovites* are void of good Manners,
 “ barbarous and brutal; and though Birth makes some
 “ Distinction between the better and the meanest
 “ Sort of them, yet are they all Slaves to the Czar,
 “ and through a base and servile Education one sees
 “ nothing amongst them, which is not low, stupid
 “ and clownish. The Czar, or Grand Duke,
 “ takes upon himself the Expences of all Ambassa-
 “ dors, as soon as they enter his Dominions, and
 “ continues to defray them so long as they remain
 “ in them; but then this Kindness, Honour, or
 “ whatever you will call it, is accompanied with a
 “ kind of beastly Arrogance. For, whereas in all
 “ other Courts the Master of the Ceremonies, or
 “ Introducer of Ambassadors, does all Civilities
 “ to publick Ministers, and gives them the Place

“ of Honour in their Houses, in the Name of his
 “ Master; the *Muscovite* Priestave does his utmost
 “ to make himself Master of that Place, avoids
 “ lighting from his Horse till the Minister is actually
 “ dismounted, throws himself first into a Coach or
 “ into a Sledge; and, in short, behaves with the ut-
 “ most Sauciness upon all Occasions. There are several
 “ Descriptions of this Court, and its Formalities.
 “ Amongst others, a most impertinent one in the
 “ Account of the Embassy sent by the Duke of
 “ *Holstein Gottorp* thither, and into *Persia* in the
 “ Year 1633. But I do not remember any, in
 “ which this Nation is set in a better light, than in
 “ that which we have of the Earl of *Carlisle*, who
 “ went thither on the Part of the King of *Great-*
 “ *Britain*, in the same Year.

“ The Priestave, who received him at *Archangel*,
 “ took the Hand of the Ambassador, and would
 “ not yield up that Point, till the Governor of
 “ the Town directed him to comply with the
 “ Earl's Desire; who was a Man of Spirit, and
 “ would not suffer any Injury to be done to the
 “ King his Master. They fixed the Day on
 “ which he was to make his Entry into *Moscow*.
 “ He was on Horseback, and after he had rode
 “ above half a League, they told him it must be
 “ put off until the next Day, and obliged him to
 “ take up his Lodgings in a pitiful Village. The
 “ Ambassador shewed not a little Resentment; he
 “ even wrote to the Czar upon it in very strong
 “ Terms: But this signified nothing, they gave
 “ him no Satisfaction, either on this Account, or
 “ on the Errand on which he came. Nay, on a
 “ certain Occasion, in which they ought to have
 “ done him the highest Honours, they took an Op-
 “ portunity to offer him the most outrageous Insult.
 “ The Czar invited him to Dinner, but caused
 “ him

“ him to be placed at a separate Table, at a greater
 “ Distance from his own than that at which his
 “ *Bojars* sate, who are in fact his Slaves, who
 “ were placed on the right Hand, while the Am-
 “ bassador sate on the left. At length he took his
 “ Leave, so little satisfied with the Court, that he
 “ refused the Presents which were offered him, and
 “ expressed his Resentment in such Terms, that the
 “ Czar sent an express Embassy to complain of him
 “ to the King his Master *.”

Though this Passage is somewhat long, yet am I
 persuaded, my dear *Brito*, you will not find it
 tedious. It proves indubitably, that the most sub-
 missive People in the World, may be at the same
 time exceeding brutal; and it gives us likewise a
 very just Idea of the Manners and Customs of
 the *Muscovites*. It is true, that within these few
 Years great Changes have been made amongst
 them; but after all, there are many things in their
 Manners that want Correction, and to Time it
 must be left to compleat what *Peter Alexowitz* has
 begun. After all, to him will be owing the total
 Change of a People so savage and so defective in
 Point of Civility.

I have been informed by the Chevalier *Maistre*,
 when I was at *Paris*, that he went often to the Inn
 at *Toulon*, where the young *Muscovites* boarded,
 whom the Czar sent thither to learn the Arts of
 Navigation and Ship-building; they served at that
 time in the Marines. When they first came to
 that Place, there was hardly a Day past over their
 Heads but they boxed, and were sometimes ready
 to draw their Knives about who should have the

* *Wicquefort de l'Ambassadeur*, lib. 1. § xviii.
 p. 476.

first Cut of the Meat. They looked more like Bears Whelps half licked, than Men. However, by degrees they lost all their ill Habits, and returned into their own Countries as polished and as well bred, as if they had been born in the Heart of Europe.

The Strangers who have gone over into *Moscow*, have done infinite Service in that Country. Besides propagating the Arts, they have shewn the People the Absurdity of their old Customs. I look upon the *French* and *Germans* settled there, as so many Missionaries employed in teaching them Humanity; and who do infinitely greater Service, than those do who run to the *East* and *West-Indies*, merely to extend the Power of the Pope. The first Duty of Men, next to that of worshipping the Deity, is ministering to the Wants of their Fellow-Creatures. He must have very little Charity in his Nature, who does not rejoice at hearing of a whole Nation being brought to their Senses. Though I am a *Jew*, I take Part in the good Fortune of Mankind; and when I understand, that a Man travels to augment it; I look upon him as an Hero. The World is the Country of a Philosopher, he ought to be ashamed of that mean and base Jealousy, which constitutes what is called National Prejudice. I wish with all my Heart, that the *Swiss* Frankness, the good Sense of the *Dutch*, *French* Wit, and *English* Penetration, were diffused through the whole human Species; they would not indeed after all this be *Jews*, but they would be worthy of becoming such, and I should willingly acknowledge them my Brethren. You see, my dear *Brito*, my Sentiments, with respect to the Mass of Mankind. I do not know whether you will approve them; but I fancy you are

are so much above all Prejudice, that you cannot but love Virtue wherever it appears.

I go from hence the first of next Month, in order to pass some Time in *England*. I have already written to *Jeremy Costa*, to hire for me an Apartment in some quiet Part of the City. It has been always my Care, throughout my Travels, to lodge in Places where, when I thought proper, I might indulge Meditation, without Danger of being disturbed. In all great Cities, and especially in *Paris* and *London*, a Man who applies himself to Study, ought to be as careful in his Choice of a Lodging, as a Man about to marry is in that of his Wife; and for the same Reason, his Tranquillity depending on his Choice. It is true, that in *France* or in *England*, one may easier change one's House than one's Wife; but after all, when one is once fixed, removing is very troublesome.

I must acknowledge to you, my Friend, that Change is troublesome to me in all things. I maintain a perfect Uniformity in my Conduct, and my Manner of Life is entirely opposite to that of some other Persons, who pass their Days in a sort of continued Agitation. I have often pitied at *Paris* a Number of *French* People who were everlastingly in a Hurry, and who seemed to me as uneasy as if they had been in a Place besieged.

To say the Truth, an Itch of Change, and a Passion for Novelty, are not unlike Possessions; I mean those, which the Vulgar apprehend come from the Devil. There are more philosophical Reasonings necessary to cure a Brain thus turned, than Drops of holy Water to a *Nazarene* Priest, who would drive *Asteroth* or *Belial* out of a Body, in which they lay in Garrison. After all, it frequently happens, that philosophical Arguments do no more good in one Case, than ecclesiastical Ceremonies

monies in the other; so that both Maladies remain incurable. This Case is common at *Paris*, where one half of the Smarts are as thoroughly fixed to their Follies, as the Convulsionists are to their Diseases. You will be astonished, my dear *Brito*, at seeing me treat these People like Demoniacks; but to speak sincerely, I do not know what else to call them. What Name can one give to a Sett of People, who commit all sorts of Extravagancies with an Air of Mystery. You will say, perhaps, that if the thing be so, I call those Demoniacks who ought to be called Cheats and Impostors. It may be so. I leave it entirely to you to decide that Question.

May God grant you, dear *Brito*, Health, Content and Happiness.

Hamburg.



LETTER CXXIX.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THERE is nothing more disputed, than that Preference which ought to be given to the Memory of sovereign Princes distinguished by their Virtues; and it seems a Thing not yet decided whose Name should stand first in this List. For my Part, dear *Isaac*, I know none so worthy of that Post of Honour, as *Henry IV.* King of *France*. All the other Princes, of whom Men talk so much,

if they had many good Qualities, have also had many bad ones; and there is not one amongst them who has not tarnished the Lustre of his Virtues, not only by a light Fault, but by some considerable Excess, incompatible with Humanity and the Character of a Man of Worth. You may not, perhaps, have reflected thoroughly upon this Subject, I will therefore give you evident Proofs in Support of my Opinion, by running over all the Heroes of Antiquity, glancing also a little on the Moderns.

If we go as high as the fabulous Times and the Siege of *Troy*, and take upon us to examine the Heroes of *Homer*, we shall find them a Company of hair-brained, proud, cunning, or perjured Persons. *Achilles* is a head-strong Creature, who suffers half the *Greeks* to be knocked of the head to no purpose; so great a Brute that he outrages the Corpse of *Hector*, whose Valour he ought to have honoured: None but mean and base Minds insult over a vanquished Enemy. *Agamemnon* was the Hangman of his Family, he sacrificed his Daughter to his own Ambition. *Ajax* is a Madman, *Ulysses* a Cheat, *Telemenes* the Murderer of his Son. In short, without doing the least Injury to these ancient Heroes, we may safely say, that the very best of them could not be stiled a Man of Probity.

But, without dwelling upon these Times of Fiction, let us look a little into the Conduct of the greatest Monarchs in the Universe. What Crimes did not *Alexander the Great* commit in the last Years of his Life? What is there gross or abominable, into which he did not run? He butchered his Friends with his own Hand, he caused his best Captains to be put to death, he gave himself up to Drinking and Debauchery; and many a Man has been broke upon the Wheel, for a less horrid Murder than that of *Clytus*. I do not know, whether

whether I ought to put *Marius* and *Sylla* into the Rank of Sovereigns; but this I know, that while they were at the Head of the *Roman* Republick, they committed more Villanies, Robberies and Murders, than were ever perpetrated by the *Miquelets* in *Catalonia*, or the *Camisars* in *France*.

Pompey and *Cæsar* were two illustrious Highway-men, who disputed for a long time which should have the Honour of robbing his Country. Both abused the Powers granted them by the Republick, and whatever pompous Titles their Partizans might give them, it is impossible for us to consider them in any other Light than as Destroyers of their Country. The one thought of enslaving it, under the Pretence of defending it; the other pretended a Right to it, in revenge for the Injuries done him.

Antony, *Augustus*, and *Lepidus*, made the Earth and the Sea blush, by their bloody Proscriptions. I look upon them as three Knights of the Road, who, on the Death of their Captain, shared his Booty among them, and a little after fell a quarrelling amongst themselves. It is true, that *Augustus* in the latter Part of his Life behaved well; but had he been a private-Man, he would have been hanged many a fair Day before his Penitence appeared. The *Nazarenes* have a Proverb, *When the Devil grew old, he turned Hermit*: This was his Character to a Hair.

Let us now quit the Heroes of Antiquity, and come to those of later Times; among whom, I own, we shall find Men of greater Worth; but none of them without their Faults, and those very considerable ones too.

Francis, the first King of *France*, had a thousand Virtues. He was good, generous, sincere; but with all these good Qualities he was certainly false
to

to his Word, after he was delivered from his Captivity in *Spain*, and paid for that Time the Emperor *Charles* the Vth in the Coin which he had more than once received. That great Emperor, with all his Virtues, could not boast of much Sincerity, and his greatest Admirers must allow this considerable Deficiency.

Times within our Memory have produced four Heroes of different Virtues, all of them endowed with great good Qualities, which each of them sullied by some notable Defects.

The first of these Heroes is *William* the Third, King of *Great-Britain*, who had without doubt very shining Properties, which would have appeared however brighter in the Eyes of Posterity, and have been more considered by Men of true good Sense, if he had never contributed to the dethroning his Father-in-law. What does the World say of a Man who lays his Hands on his Father's Goods, and obliges him to run about in a miserable Manner, begging his Bread?

Lewis the XIVth is the second of these Heroes. He was good-natured, magnificent, hated Cruelty, loved learned Men, and encouraged the Arts and Sciences, so as to render them flourishing in his Dominions. His Enemies continually objected his exorbitant Ambition; and yet it is not difficult to justify him upon that Head, at least to excuse him. He had good Reasons for punishing the *Spaniards*, who, for a long Series of Time, had endeavoured the Destruction of *France*. If he aggrandized his Kingdom, nothing can be plainer, than that in augmenting his proper Glory, he augmented also the Good of his People. His Ambition and his Conquests, therefore, may be well enough approved. In short, he had equalled *Henry* the IVth, had he never taken the Advice of the Jesuits,

Jesuits, or set his Eyes on *Madam Montespan*. To take a Woman away from her Husband, and to be so far governed by Priests, as to drive out of his Dominions by their Advice People to whom the House of *Bourbon* had infinite Obligations, rendered it necessary for *Lewis* the XIVth to have all the great Qualities he stood possessed of, from preventing his Fame from being utterly destroyed by those two most remarkable Ships in his Conduct.

I know very well, my dear *Isaac*, that the Politicians excuse the Banishment of the Reformed, by the Necessity there was of having but one Religion in *France*, in order to establish its Tranquillity on a firm Basis. I must own, that these Reasons have a great deal of Weight. However, in exiling the Protestants, there was no Necessity of having recourse to as many Murders and Proscriptions, as ever rendered a Triumvirate infamous. I own too, that it is said, that *Lewis* the XIVth was totally ignorant of all these Cruelties; and that being as he was of a humane Disposition, he would undoubtedly have hindered, had he known any thing of the matter. But, granting this, he was still responsible; because he was so weak as to give himself up to the pernicious Counsels of Monks and Devotees.

The Character of the late Czar *Peter* the First is, properly speaking, a Mixture of Magnanimity and Cruelty, of Virtues and Vices. Let the World say what they will of his Glory, I shall never be brought to believe, that his intractable Fierceness was a Virtue, or that a Father ought to reckon among his illustrious Actions the Death of his Son.

Charles the XIIth of *Sweden* had a surprising Courage, and with it a Multitude of other great Qualities; but he pushed his Revenge to Extremity;

mity; and perhaps God himself, by that Chain of Evils which followed after the Battle of *Pultowa*, punished in this World his Cruelty towards *Patkul*, which was the more inexcusable, considering the Character with which he was clothed.

All these Heroes of whom I have been speaking, and whose Characters I have ventured to examine, must be at least allowed to have tarnished the Lustre of their Virtues, by capital Errors. *Henry* the IVth had no Failings, but such as are incident to human Nature. He vanquished his Enemies, and as soon as he had done so, he generously forgave them whatever they had done amiss. He conquered himself his own Kingdom, and made War only to recover what was justly his Due, and to drive out those Enemies who came to attack him in his own Dominions, and to foment Troubles and Divisions among his Subjects. He was the Father of his People; the Widow and the Orphan always found an Asylum at the Foot of his Throne. He loved Women, but not like *Lewis* the XIVth. He was in that so good and so perfect, that if in the Times of Idolatry, when illustrious Princes were ranked amongst the Gods, he had been there placed, I believe I should have wanted an extraordinary Measure of divine Grace, to hinder me from entering the Temple of *Henry* the IVth, and burning Incense on his Altar.

France is at this Day governed by a Prince, who may perhaps one Day rival the greatest King of his Race. He has already shewn us Good-nature, Generosity, Clemency and Discretion, almost beyond Comparison; so many good Qualities ought surely to be considered as an Earnest, that other Virtues shall appear when Occasion calls them forth.

The

The *Nazarenes* have a Custom of praying devoutly in their Churches for the Safety of their King. They intreat Providence daily to preserve him and render him prosperous. Who could have imagined, all this considered, that the best King in the World should be assassinated in the midst of his People, to whom he was a common Parent? O strange! O hapless Instance of the Folly and Frenzies of Men! *Lewis* the XIth met with few Rebels amongst his Subjects. *Henry* the IVth found amongst them Enemies the most cruel.

The best Kings have seldom met with proper Returns from their People. It seems as if Severity was the sole Method whereby Fear and Reverence can be impressed on the Croud; mean and servile Creatures, whom only a rigid and inflexible Administration can govern. The Kindness and Clemency of the present King of *France*, hath served but to increase the Fierceness of the *Molinists*, and the Malignity of the *Jansenists*. Confident of Impunity, they have from time to time committed the most unpardonable Offences.

It is not long since a Prelate, whose Name is *Lefiteau**, who had been a Jesuit before his Promotion to that Rank, composed a Book, intituled, *An Answer to the Anecdotes on the Constitution Unigenitus*. In this Piece, in refuting the Sentiments of the *Jansenists*, he has run into the most outrageous Invectives against Persons the most venerable; and not contented even with this, hath treated very unadvisedly of the Rights and Privileges of the Kingdom. The King was content with simply condemning the Books, forbidding the Sale thereof; and directing, that all who were possessed of Copies, should bring them to Persons who were appointed to

* Bishop of *Sisteron*.

that

that End, by an Arrêt of Council. Without question, my Friend, you apprehend that the Prelate, struck with the Kindness and Clemency of his Prince, hath ever since behaved with more Caution. Nothing like it. Some Months after the Condemnation of his Work, he published a Sequel, written in the very same Spirit; this was again condemned by another Arrêt of Council. Maugre all this, our Prelate is again at work, and will, in all Probability, publish another Volume by way of Continuation to the Anecdotes.

To say the Truth, dear *Isaac*, Subjects are sometimes apt to abuse the Good-nature and Compassion of their Princes. There is not, in my Opinion, any Boldness equal to that of some Ecclesiasticks. They will sometimes undertake the most extravagant Things. That Consideration, which they think is due to their Character, gives them Spirit enough to undertake any thing, insomuch that they execute with Assurance what other People would not so much as suffer to enter into their Heads. One may safely say, my Friend, that in all Religions the greatest Happiness which can possibly attend the Society, is to have Men of Wisdom and of peaceable Dispositions for their Priests. Ecclesiasticks are in States what Emeticks are in Medicine; nothing more useful when applied properly, nothing so dangerous when administered *mal-a-propos*. A Prelate of Probity, an honest Parson, a prudent Minister of any Church, a virtuous Rabbi, are inestimable Treasures. But what Mischiefs do they occasion when these People give themselves up to work Evil?

Mayest thou, dear *Isaac*, enjoy Content, Happiness and Satisfaction, as long as thou enjoyest Life.

Hamburgb.

P. S.

P. S. It is proper that I should take notice here of a Thing which will be thought ridiculous by such only as know not the mighty Impression which the Actions of truly great Men stamp on Hearts sincerely addicted to Virtue. I have twenty times, when passing the *Pont-neuf* at *Paris* in the Night, on seeing his Statue, felt so affecting a Remembrance of the rare Qualities of *Henry IV*, that I could not avoid going up to the Iron Rails, and kissing them with infinite Respect. I must too own, that once or twice I have burst there into Tears. I know there are some People who will call this Folly, but I must tell them that I despise alike their Censure and their Approbation. The Descendants of those who reached the Knife to that august Monarch's Breast, can have no Idea of the Sense honest People have of his Fate. The Difference between them and me is this; I salute, with proper Respect, the Statue of a great and good King, while they superstitiously, and with a silly Veneration, kiss the Relicks of some doting Monk or canting Hypocrite.



LETTER CXXX.

JACOB BRITO, to AARON MONCECA.

IT is some Time, my dear *Monceca*, since I left off speaking to you of the Manners and Customs of the ancient *Egyptians*: But I am now going to communicate to you what I have observed most curious in their Tombs. I have examined many, and in all have met with what abundantly satisfied my Curiosity.

There

There lies stretched on the Banks of the Nile, a sandy Plain, which is, as it were, the general Burying-place of this Nation. It is full of Sepulchres, many of which have been opened. There are found in most of them Mummies in Chests or Coffins, which are still intire. Near these Coffins are frequently found the Images of those Gods, to whom, while living, the Person was most devoted. Thence is evidently derived a Custom amongst the *Turks*, of having certain Sentences out of the Alcoran interred with them, as also that practised by some superstitious *Nazarenes*, of having the Images of their Patrons buried with them: Thus you see this vain and silly Notion is far from being new. After this manner Superstition is perpetuated, and one Religion adopts the Chimæras and Puerilities of another.

The Method in use among some of the *Nazarenes*, of placing in their Churches certain Images, *ex voto*, in discharge of their Vows, is in like manner taken from the *Egyptians* and the *Greeks*. When they had either suffered Shipwreck, or very narrowly escaped some great Danger, they caused it to be represented in a Piece of a moderate Size, and when, by shewing it, they had excited the Charity and Compassion of the People, at last they dedicated it in the Temple of that Divinity to whom they thought themselves most indebted for their Preservation.

What in this respect was done two thousand five hundred Years ago, is practised at this Day. The Saints, Male and Female, have taken place of the Gods and Goddesses. St. George supplies the room of *Mars*, St. Anthony that of *Pan*, St. Lucia stands for *Diana*, and St. Cecilia for *Minerva*. There is no Corporation, no Company of Tradesmen without its Patron. The Shoe-makers have St. *Crispin*, the Taylors St. *Placidus*, the Rope-dancers St. *Pantaleon*.

taleon. Though these last were never regularly incorporated, yet the Danger they stand exposed to, of breaking Legs and Arms, hath obliged them to look out a Patron for their whole Fraternity.

When I was at *Venice*, I was often in the Churches of the *Nazarenes*, the Walls of which were covered with Thighs, and Heads, and Hands, and Arms, and Feet, &c. all made of Wax, and consecrated to the Saint unto whom the Church was dedicated, in Acknowledgment of Miracles supposed to have been wrought by him. This formed at once the most pleasant, and withal, the most whimsical Sight in the World.

A *Nazarene*, who had not much Faith in Legs of Wax, told me a pleasant Story when I was in *Germany*. He informed me that one *Michon* having had the good Luck to marry his Sweetheart, exerted himself in an extraordinary Way for some Months after their Nuptials. He had a sound Constitution; the Accomplishment of his Desires added to his Vigour, and Madam *Michon* thought herself exceeding happy in her Choice. However, an unlucky Accident came suddenly to damp the Felicity of this happy Bride. Mr. *Michon*, who was neither a Saint nor a true Lover, used to stray now and then, believing it incompatible with the Character of a Smart, to be confined like the Vulgar. One Evening having supped with his Friends, and the Wine putting odd Notions into his Head, he went to a certain Temple of *Venus*, where he offered, according to the Custom of the Place, and brought away a flaming Return. Mr. *Michon*, however, perceived it in time, and being excessively embarrassed, imposed on his Wife a Course of Abstinence, equally unusual and unsatisfactory. She endured for some time this Misfortune without speaking, but at last, losing all Patience, she ventured to enquire the Reason of his Behaviour

in

in the following Terms. I cannot conceive, said she, Mr. *Michon*, whence your Indifference proceeds; but I am very sensible that for some time past we have lived together pretty coolly. This Discourse perplexed the Husband not a little, he would not on any score tell the matter of fact; and yet finding it necessary to say somewhat, he first fetched a deep Sigh, and then in a faint Voice proceeded thus: Alas! Madam *Michon*! I have met with the saddest Accident! The poor Woman alarmed at this Introduction, pressed him to explain himself. Is it so, cried she, that you have still your Secrets; what then is become of that eternal Affection you swore to bear me? I am going, continued he, to inform you of an Adventure which has driven me almost to Despair. I went some Days ago with a few Friends to a Country Place not far from Town. There walking about, I attempted to jump over a little Ditch, and my Foot slipping,—I can scarce tell you the rest. I made such an Effort to save myself, that I quite strained, not my Leg or my Ankle, but a Part of far greater Consequence. O mercy! exclaimed Madam *Michon*, what is it you tell me? Is it possible? Yes, my dear Spouse, returned Mr. *Michon*, there is nothing more certain. But bad as it is, my Malady is not without Remedy. An eminent Surgeon, under whose Care I am, assures me, that in six Weeks I shall be certainly cured, without retaining the least Inconvenience from the Accident. O, rejoined the Lady, you have quite revived my Spirits, I was afraid your Illness would have been far more stubborn and dangerous. We must, however, neglect nothing which may contribute to your Cure; I will go and offer a Vow to St. *Pantaleon*. It is to him we address in case of broken Bones or strained Sinews; I doubt not, but by his Assistance, to see

you speedily recovered. Madam *Michon* made haste to execute her Design. She made the Figure of the Part afflicted in Wax, and then away she hurried to the Church of the *Cordeliers*, to have it exposed in an honourable Place. A young Lad carried the Offering in a Basen covered with Linen. The Monk who performed the Ceremony removing the Cloth, was surprized at the Sight, and turning away his Eyes, Carry away that, said he to the Boy. Father, replied the Child, in a soft Tone, it is the Vow of Madam *Michon*. Carry it away, I say, cried the Monk hastily, and tell her, we have incomparably better in the Convent. Thus Madam *Michon's* Vow lost its Place, but her Husband recovered speedily for all that.

The *Nazarenes* are the first in turning their own Superstitions into Ridicule: But they continue Slaves to them for all that. This, dear *Monceca*, is an evident Proof that there is little Solidity in their Judgments. I cannot well comprehend how Folks act commonly directly opposite to their Manner of Thinking. One is surprized to see the most extravagant things done sometimes by Men who discourse very reasonably. When one hears these People talk, one is apt to imagine that they were intended for the Instructors of Mankind; yet, upon examining their Conduct, the Man of Sense is lost, we discover in his stead, the Bigot, the Furioso, and the Debauchée.

I now return, my Friend, to the Tombs of the ancient *Egyptians*. You know that the Pyramids, which are so famous, are the Monuments of Kings. The Grandees of the Kingdom followed their Examples, and caused those to be erected which are distinguished by the Name of the lesser Pyramids, and lie along the Side of the River. As for private Persons, they were interred in the Catacombs which
are

are very numerous in the sandy Plain situated in the Neighbourhood of the southern Pyramids. When they were interred in these Tombs, they covered the Stone which closed up the Entrance four or five Feet deep with Sand, which contributed not a little to the Preservation of the Bodies, by securing them from the Injuries of the exterior Air. Over and above this Precaution, there was no *Egyptian* but was embalmed after his Decease, in a manner more or less costly, according to the Abilities of his Heirs.

Superstition was also the Cause of all this Care about Funerals. The Priests assured the People, that in a certain Period of Years, an entire Revolution would happen, and those whose Bodies could be preserved to that time, would have them restored and live in them again. Every one, from that Self-love which is inherent to Man, being desirous of finding at that time his old Case, directed his Heirs to take all imaginable Care of their Bodies. What astonishes me is, that the Hump-backed, the Lame, the Blind, and every other maimed kind of Folks, had as strong an Inclination as the rest, to inhabit a second time so incommodious and so disagreeable a Lodging. It is apparent from hence, that these *Egyptians* did likewise believe, that when the Body was once destroyed, there was no getting another. However, it is certain, that all this Pains was taken for the Cabinets of the Curious, and the Apothecaries Shops of the present Times.

Amongst the Bodies of deceased great Men, which had been preserved through many Ages, and were actually intire in the time of *Augustus*, Historians mention particularly that of *Alexander* the Great. They tell us farther, that *Augustus* being in *Egypt* had the Curiosity of going to see the Tomb of that famous Prince, and that he saw therein the

Body in a Shrine of Glass substituted in the room of one of Gold, which was taken away by *Seleuchus Cybiosactes* *. It is idle, dear *Monceca*, for Sovereigns, the most potent and the most dreaded, to dream of respect being paid them after Death. Time delivers Men from that servile Attention which living Princes exact; and the Tombs of the old *Egyptian* Kings, that of *Alexander* and other Heroes of Antiquity, have been violated with as little Ceremony as those of private Men. They were not so much as spared in Times wherein their Memories were recent. We adore, in a manner, living Princes, and Crouds of Flatterers continually pursue them with Vows for their Prosperity: But,

When breathless, they are Dust become,
And all the Glories of their Pride,
Are shrunk within the silent Tomb,
Tho' for its Splendor it be ey'd,
Yet they are low and lost indeed,
And hungry Worms upon them feed.

There all their swelling Titles lose,
Givers of Peace and Thunderbolts of War;
And as no more they can their Bounty use,
There free from Flatterers they are.
Nature makes equal in their Graves,
Whom Fortune made or Lords or Slaves †.

See, my dear *Monceca*, what becomes of Monarchs the most potent and the most redoubtable! It is impossible to express the sudden, the certain Fall of human Greatness better than *Malherbe* has done.

* Suetonius in *Octav. cap. xviii.* Dion. Cass. *lib. 4. p. 454.* Strabo, *lib. xvii. p. 794.*

† Malherbe.

The first time I read over the Works of that inimitable Poet, I was prodigiously struck with these Lines. A Native of *France*, settled at *Pera*, made me a present of his Writings; which I have constantly preserved with the greatest care, as scarce inferior to those of *Horace*.

Take care of yourself, dear *Monceca*, live content, happy, and without Care; and let me hear from you sometimes.

Cairo.



LETTER CXXXI.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

IN my last I wrote you my Sentiments concerning those great Princes, who are in some measure deified by Posterity; and I then ventured without Ceremony to give *Henry IV. of France* Preference before them all. I have often reflected since that Time on the Reasons which induced my so doing; and the more I consider them, the more I am persuaded that I was in the right in so doing. I have so thorough a Sense of the great Virtues of that Monarch, that I make no question but Heaven designed the Punishment of *France* by the Civil Wars, and other Mischiefs she endured, during the Minority of *Lewis XIII.* for the little Care taken in avenging that terrible Parricide. They contented themselves with punishing the Assassin; and the

Loss of so great and good a King, was followed only by the Execution of a single Villain. On such an Occasion, all, who by their Practices or by their Discourses had promoted so abominable a Fact, should have been waisted together to their long Homes, through a Sea of Blood. All the Proscriptions of the Triumvirates which made *Rome* itself tremble, would have been justifiable at such a time; and there ought to have been offered on the Tomb of that generous Prince every Person, on whom a just and well-grounded Suspicion could have been fixed.

It seemed as if Heaven reserved the Punishment of this Crime to itself, in order to render it more terrible, and to exert itself on such Occasions in an extraordinary manner: For so it is, that Providence rarely permits Assassins to escape even in this Life their deserved Rewards, especially when it is a Prince on whom their Cruelties have been exercised. The Murder of *Cæsar* is a pregnant Instance of the Truth of what I say. History informs us, that of sixty Persons who conspired against him, not one died a natural Death. They all perished miserably, and with all the Circumstances of Horror that can be conceived. *Cassius*, who was the last, met a Fate as melancholy as that of the rest*. The Deity, always careful and attentive to the Safety and Tranquillity of Men, seems to have bound himself to punish even in this World such Wretches as dare attack the Persons of Princes.

Reflect, my dear *Isaac*, on a thing which is not more strange than true. Almost all the *Nazarene* Monarchs who have been assassinated, have met with their Fate from the Hands of Monks, or from Persons influenced by them. It was a Do-

* Plutarc. in *Cæfare*. Sueton. in *Jul. Cæs. cap. lxxx*. Eutrop. *lib. vi. circa finem*.

minican who poisoned the Emperor *Henry VII*; and in the Performance of that execrable Fact, he had recourse to the most sacred Rite in his Religion. Another Monk of the same Order, plunged his poniard into the Breast of *Henry III. of France*. A Jesuit solicited *, and at length influenced a crack-brained Youth † to attempt the Murder of the best King in the World ‡. What Ills may they not perpetrate, when assembled in a Body? And yet those who ought most to hate and to detest them, suffer them to throng about their Persons through an Excess of Weakness. We are told, that *Lewis the XIIIth*, of whom I was speaking to you, trembled when he saw a Monk, and did not care that they should remain long in his Presence. I readily believe this; but you may rely upon it, that even to this day Monks are forbid to enter the Castle of *Versailles* without Permission, or to come any where else where the King is. I was informed of this, when I was at *Paris*; and I am positive, as to the Fact.

In spite of all these Marks of Contempt, which are shewn towards the Monks on certain Occasions, I think we may justly apply to them what *Tacitus* says of Astrologers, against whom they continually issued Edicts, in order to drive them out of *Rome*, and yet kept them there notwithstanding †. But this is a Business belongs to the *Nazarenes*, and not to us; if they have a mind to be governed by Monks, what have we to do to find fault; let us leave them in their Infatuation, and proceed to a more entertaining Subject.

* John Guignard.

† John Chatel.

‡ Henry IV.

† *Genus Hominum Potentibus insidam, sperantibus fallax, quod in Civitate nostrâ, &c vetabitur semper, & retinebitur.* Tacit. Hist. lib. I.

I am soon to embark for *England*, with two Men of very different Characters; the one is an extravagant Admirer of the *Italian* Musick, a great Traveller for the sake of improving himself in this Science, and who has been actually in *Italy* for that purpose a considerable space of time. He never speaks of any thing but Concerts, Symphonies, Virtuosi, Sonatas, Motets, Cantatas, &c. The other is a Metaphysician, everlastingly in the Clouds, and who employs all his time in reconciling the Systems of *Descartes*, *Gassendi*, *Locke*, and *Malebranche*. He is disturbed in his Conversation, so as to appear distracted; and sometimes one can scarce get four Words out of him in a whole Day. One sees him frequently stamp, bite his Nails, scratch his Head; and when the Question is very intricate, you would think by his Distortions that he laboured under some very terrible Distemper. It happens now and then that in the midst of his profound Meditations, our Lover of Musick consults him on the Beauty of a new Air; *Sir*, says he, *do me the favour to give me your Opinion of this Song*. Upon this he falls a singing, and whilst he is a quavering his *Italian*, the Metaphysician shrugs up his Shoulders, turns up his Eyes towards Heaven, and from the bottom of his Heart wishes Song and Songster both at the Devil. He endeavours to get away, and to shelter himself in another Room; but the Man of Song, to prevent this, seizes his Arm: *Ah, dear Sir*, says he, *don't stir, let me sing that Verse over again! — Well! Is it not fine? — Without question, that Vinci is a great Man! I protest, I would rather have been the Author of his Artaxerxes, than be King of Corsica. Speak truth now, Sir, and acknowledge, that Philosophers make but a mean Figure in the World, when compared with Musicians.*

These

These last Words bring the Metaphysician to his Senses, and how much soever he was buried in Thought, he could not endure with Patience to hear these great Men run down, of whom he thinks it his Honour that he is a Disciple. *You think then,* says he, *with a disdainful Smile, that a Musician ought to receive a deal of Respect in the World, and that there is a great deal of Knowledge and Genius requisite in order to sing Re, Mi, Fa, Sol. Go, go, Sir, you only banter. Hark you, I will tell you of what Use Musick is of in the World. It serves for ——— nothing; or, at most, it serves only to amuse a few poor giggling Girls, and effeminate Petit-Maitres. But Philosophy instructs Men how to behave wisely. This gives them Purity of Manners, teaches them to bridle their Passions; there is no Secret in Nature, which it does not unfold. In a word, it employs our Wits, and satisfies our Desires, at one and the same time.*

“ But tell me, Sir,” replied our Virtuoso in Musick, “ are not you a Philosopher, or do not you
 “ at least study Philosophy; are you in consequence
 “ of it content and quiet in your Mind? You
 “ shall hardly persuade me of that. I see you
 “ in continual Motion; you do not enjoy so much
 “ as a Moment’s Ease. You eat sometimes, with-
 “ out knowing that you are eating; and speak
 “ too, not seldom in the very same way. Your
 “ Head is so full of Chimæra’s, that you can hard-
 “ ly tell when it is Day and when it is Night.
 “ The other Day you took into your Head to throw
 “ yourself into a Reservoir; and if I, good-for-
 “ nothing Man of Song, had not caught hold of
 “ your Coat, your Philosophy had been in great
 “ Hazard of being drowned. Do you think to
 “ persuade me, that a Science which transports
 “ People so, as not to see a great Collection of

“ Water at the Foot of a Gravel-walk, communicates any kind of Wisdom? For my part, to tell you the truth, I cannot help thinking that you Philosophers are very comical sort of People. They are reading, forsooth, what is written in the Heavens, without knowing what passes under their Feet*. You have a mighty Contempt for Musick, Sir; but I defy you to prove that it is half so mischievous, as that sort of Fanaticism, which you call Philosophy. If it ravishes the Senses, it is in so soft, so sweet a manner, that we fall into a kind of ecstasick Repose.

“ Do but observe a Man coming out of an Opera-House, you see him beating Time with his Feet as it were for half an Hour. If he is young and light-timbered, he cuts a few Capers, and presently falls a singing a favourite Air. He comes up to a Woman with a gallant Air, like that of *Acis* when he salutes *Galatea*; all is easy, all is pleasant, like the Place from whence he comes. On the other Hand, observe a young Fellow at the University, as he is coming from the publick Schools, his Eyes how wild! his Air how fierce! his Head full of Logick, and a Syllogism between his Teeth. One Disputation just finished, he meditates another; and is considering in his Mind what new Arguments may be made use of for demolishing his Adversary. He is everlastingly out of humour; and all his Knowledge, all his Philosophy serves only to torment him. Tell me, dear Sir, which is most useful to Society, that kind of Study which vexes People, puts them as it were out of their Senses; and under pretence of rendering them wise, does in fact make

* *Quod est ante Pedes nemo spectat; Cæli scrutantur plagas.* Cicero de Divinat. lib. ii.

“ them

“ them Fools; or that which amuses them agree-
 “ ably, removes all Chagrin, and leaves the Soul
 “ in perfect Tranquility? This, dear Sir, is the
 “ specifick Difference between Musick and Philo-
 “ sophy. You may say what you please, but I
 “ shall never alter my Opinion.”

Mighty well! replied the Metaphysician, with
 an Air of Contempt; *I would advise you to pass all*
your Life in Singing, you will be then upon the Level
with the Nightingales. As for me, I apprehend God
has given me a Faculty of Thinking, and I am obliged
to make use of it. I do not pretend to restrain you
from exercising the Talents, bestowed upon you by Na-
ture; but I expect that you should likewise allow me to
make use of such as have fallen to my Share.

“ You call that Thinking, replied our Advocate
 “ for Harmony, which is no better than following
 “ wild and extravagant Ideas, which are the Effects
 “ of a disordered Imagination; for my part, I
 “ look upon Thinking in quite another Light. I
 “ apprehend it to be such an Use of Reason, as en-
 “ ables me to pass easily through Life, and admini-
 “ sters to all those Wants which in the course there-
 “ of I am sure to feel. I believe it is better to leave
 “ searching into Things beyond our Understanding,
 “ and to apply ourselves to that sort of Knowledge
 “ which is useful and necessary. As for Example,
 “ contriving how to live commodiously and happily,
 “ to eat, drink, sleep, laugh, sing, and pass plea-
 “ santly the Days which Heaven bestows upon us,
 “ instead of bestowing them in useless Meditations.
 “ Tell me, dear Sir, what sort of Illness your way
 “ of thinking will cure? Can a Man, by studying
 “ the Metaphysicks, ease himself of a Megrims. So
 “ far from it, that it will make him ten times
 “ worse; and he had better by half have heard an
 “ Overture of the Opera, or any other agreeable

“ Piece of Musick, which might have charmed his
 “ Mind, and rendered him insensible of his Pain.
 “ When a Man is attacked by the Vapours, what
 “ good will Philosophy do him? Turn him perhaps
 “ quite mad, by increasing his Melancholy. But
 “ on the other Hand, if he hears a Violin, his ill
 “ Humour goes off, his Spirits begin to revive, and
 “ he is as chearful as ever. There cannot be a
 “ stronger Demonstration of the Power of Musick,
 “ than what is seen every Day in *Italy*, in the Case
 “ of a Person bit by a Tarantula. Go, harangue
 “ the sick Person about the Schemes of your *Gas-*
 “ *sendi*, *Descartes*, and all your Men of Science, it
 “ will signify just nothing; the Man will certainly
 “ die, in spite of all your Eloquence. Let but a
 “ Fiddle enter, up jumps the Patient, leaps, skips,
 “ capers, and derives from Musick that Remedy
 “ which restores him to his Health and Senses. Af-
 “ ter he has footed it an Hour or two, weary and
 “ quite worn out, he falls fast asleep; and when
 “ he awakes, finds himself perfectly well. All the
 “ Philosophy in the World can do nothing like
 “ this: Can it?”

I do not know, *Isaac*, whether the Conversations
 of my Fellow-Travellers will appear diverting to
 you; but I assure you, they prove so to me, and
 I pass my Moments very agreeably in hearing their
 Altercations.

May'st thou enjoy thy Health, live content and
 happy, and may the God of our Fathers continue to
 cover thee with Blessings.

Hamburgh.

LETTER



L E T T E R CXXXII.

JACOB BRITO, to AARON MONCECA.

THE Dissentions, my dear *Monceca*, to which our Brethren stand exposed in this Country, have led me to make many Reflections on the reciprocal Mischiefs the *Nazarenes* do each other in consequence of that horrid Maxim, That it is not only lawful, but even necessary to exterminate Hereticks. The Consequences flowing from this cruel Principle are fatal alike to Men of all Beliefs, notwithstanding those who maintain them do not advert to its necessary Consequence, that it exposes themselves to all the Evils they inflict on their Adversaries. If once they reflected on the Inconveniencies which a persecuting Principle draws after it, they would quickly change their Sentiments.

People that are Hereticks in one Country, are Orthodox in another; as those that are Orthodox in one Place, are Hereticks in another. This Truth will appear plainly, if we consider ever so slightly the prevailing Religions throughout *Europe*. A Protestant is an Heretick at *Paris*, but is one of the Elect at *London*. A Papist is an Idolater in *England*; whereas in *France*, it is held there is no Passage to Heaven, but by the Popish Road. See then, how Nations who believe oppositely, agree in believing this, that all are Hereticks who are not of their Religion; that is, of their established Religion. If we should suppose the Principles of the Inquisition spread throughout all Nations, what Horrors! what Blood-
shed

shed would they bring upon the World! In *Portugal*, in *Spain*, in *France*, in *Italy*, in *Austria*, *Bohemia* and *Poland*, they would cut the Throats, burn, break on the Wheel, or massacre without Distinction, Lutherans, Calvinists, Church-of-England Men, &c. In *Holland*, *Great-Britain*, *Denmark* and *Prussia*, they would hang and draw Papists, if some Divines had their Way, and the Magistrate had no more Humanity than the Clergy. In *Muscovy* they would tyrannize over and condemn to Death both Catholics and Protestants, as equally Hereticks, in disbelieving the *Russian* Faith. In *Turkey* again, the same *Muscovites* would fall a Sacrifice to the Glory of *Mohammed*; and in *Persia*, to the Honour of *Ali*.

Observe, dear *Monceca*, the Horrors, Crimes and Impieties, which follow incontestably from this Maxim, That we ought to persecute Hereticks, and oblige them to change their Sentiments by Punishments and Tortures. If such as pretend to be animated by a true Zeal for the Glory of God, were really influenced by any such Spirit, they would be far from endeavouring thus to convince the Mind, or from thinking it a right Way to remove Prejudice from the Heart, to have recourse to such Violences as are contrary to the Law of Nature and the Idea which Reason gives Men of the Deity. They would perceive, that in persecuting their Adversaries they expose their Brethren to the same Mischiefs wherever they were scattered in other Places. But inasmuch as they are guided by their Passion, or rather by their Fury, provided they do but accomplish their Designs in the Places where they are Masters, they never think of what may happen any where else, in consequence of what they do at home.

The Roman-Catholicks, or rather the Court of *Rome*, the Ecclesiasticks and the Monks, employed
all

all sorts of Methods, in order to drive the Protestants out of *France*. After a good deal of Murder and Bloodshed, they brought their Project to bear. But what followed; why, the Popish Religion itself received very shortly the greatest Check it ever sustained. *England* totally barred Popery from returning thither; it cost an unhappy King three Kingdoms; or rather it cost a weak Prince such a Sacrifice for confiding in Priests; and the Protestants they had banished served for a Pretence to exile an infinite Number of Papists, and seizing their Effects.

While at *Paris* they destroyed without Mercy whatever wore the Appearance of Protestantism; the Prince of *Orange* wisely made use of the Handle their Madness furnished. To say the Truth, his Affairs would have suffered, if those of the Reformed Religion had been more mildly treated. To the Persecutions raised by the *French* Clergy, and to the Clergy in another Country, that Prince stood indebted for the Crown of *Great-Britain*. If the Jesuits, from their Itch to governing, had not put King *James* on so many Extravagancies, *William* the Illd would have found no Occasion of going over to *England*, in order to maintain the Rights and Liberties of an oppressed Nation. All Historians agree, that King *James* pushed his Attachment and Submission to the Jesuits much too far. *Madam de la Fayette*, though a zealous Catholick, acknowledges nevertheless, in her Memoirs of the Court of *France* during the Years 1688 and 1689, that when they came in that Country thoroughly to know the Character of this Prince, they retained for him only a sort of Pity bordering on Contempt. The Archbishop of *Rheims*, *Maurice le Tellier*, as we are informed by that Lady, could not help saying, in a sneering way, *Look upon that good Man, he quitted three Kingdoms for one Mass*. It was also thought a

Mark

Mark of his bad Taste, that he was continually beset with Jesuits, and that he affected to say that he was of their Order *. The Continuator of *Rapin's History of England*, though they are declared Enemies to the Protestant Religion, have made no Difficulty of inserting this singular Story, and of adding to it the following Reflection: *They*, that is, the People of *France*, went so far, as to impute secretly his Misfortunes to him, as if they were Crimes, on account of his having engaged *France* in a tedious and ruinous War, of which they foresaw the Effects †.

It was not, however, King *James*, dear *Monceca*, to whom the *French* ought to have attributed the Troubles and Difficulties that were brought upon them by the maintaining his Cause. It was to them who gave him those pernicious Counsels, and plunged him into that Abyss from whence he never got out; it was to them that they should have attributed those Evils, and on them they should have devolved their Spleen. The Misfortunes of that Prince were the Effects of the Ambition of the Jesuits, and of their pernicious Maxim, That all Means are to be employed for destroying Hereticks. The *English* had before their Eyes the Example of the *French* Protestants; and they were afraid with good Reason, that they should one Day find it their own Case. "If the King, said they, begins to diminish our Privileges, and to extend those of our Adversaries, we shall by little and little be reduced into a Situation which will incapacitate us from resisting the Designs of the Court of Rome. At present they make use of Fraud, by and by they may make use of open Force. The *French* Protestants set *Henry* the IVth upon the

* P. 120, 124, 155.

† Continuation de *Rapin Thoyras*, tom. xi. p. 41.
"Throne;

“ Throne; so long as he lived, they were not op-
 “ pressed, but a little after his Death they began
 “ to trick them, and then to persecute them; at
 “ last they banished them, and taught them to ex-
 “ perience the Effects of that abominable Maxim,
 “ that to make use of all Methods to extirpate
 “ Hereticks, is allowed by divine and human
 “ Laws. Let us then prevent the Storm which
 “ threatens us; let us strangle the Serpent we have
 “ nourished in our Bosom, and give a mortal
 “ Wound to Popery, by dethroning a King who
 “ protects it, and would establish it on the Ruins
 “ of our Liberty, and our Religion. If there is
 “ any thing base in this Action, our Enemies have
 “ no Right to reproach us; if we rebel, we rebel
 “ against a Popish Prince, and they set us the Ex-
 “ ample in refusing to acknowledge a Protestant
 “ one. Did they not publish a Million of Writings,
 “ to prove that a People were not bound to submit
 “ to a Heretick Prince? their Preachers employed
 “ all their Talents for publishing this Doctrine in
 “ the midst of *Paris*. At present we find it neces-
 “ sary to adopt their Maxim; we do no more than
 “ dethrone a King attainted and convicted of Pope-
 “ ry, which, with Reason, we look upon as of all
 “ others the most dangerous Heresy.”

Observe, my dear *Monceca*, in the Remarks made
 by the *English*, what fatal Effects the Doctrine of
 Reprisals in religious Wars will inevitably have.
 Consider, at the same time, the Mischief which the
 ungoverned Rage of different Sects hath brought
 upon whole Nations. For after all, notwithstanding
 the Risques the Protestants in *England* might
 run, I can by no means approve of their Conduct.
 I am thoroughly persuaded, that it is not lawful for
 Subjects, on any Pretence whatsoever, to take up
 Arms against their Prince; and I have often, with
 great

great Pleasure, heard you maintain the same thing with much Vivacity. However, when once we admit, that Men are at liberty to break their Faith to Hereticks, and to compel them by Force to alter their Opinions, we open a wide Gap to all sorts of Disorders; we shake the Thrones of Kings, and breathe into the People, among whom we inhabit, a Spirit of Treason and Rebellion.

- If it were once thoroughly established throughout *Europe*, That Religion has nothing to do with Government, how happy would the People be, and how much more at Ease their Kings, than now they are? What is it to them, if some of their Subjects sing in *French*, in *English*, in *Dutch*, or in *German*, while others believe the Psalms are profaned in any other Language but *Latin*? If for this Purpose they assemble on *Saturday* or on *Sunday*, pay their Taxes, and discharge all the Duties they owe to Society? But, say the Politicians, when there are many Religions in a Country, it is impossible but they should produce Civil Wars. This I admit, if any one of these Religions maintains that pernicious Maxim, That it is lawful to employ all Methods for subverting and destroying others; and that sometimes all the other Sects will unite together, in order to demolish that which would otherwise tyrannize. But in a well-governed State, where the People in general are persuaded that every Man ought to be allowed to think freely, and to serve God as he sees proper, all the World will enjoy Peace and Quiet, though there should be fifty different Religions in the Dominion of that State. In order to be convinced of the Truth of this Proposition, we need only enquire into the present Situation of *England* and *Holland*. How many different Sects are there in those Countries? Yet they give each other no manner of Trouble. Jews, Anti-Trinitarians,

tarians, Quakers, Anabaptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Independents, Muggletonians, dispute sometimes with each other, but they never think of cutting Throats; and if sometimes there happens any Troubles on account of religious Controversies in *England*, all the different Sects treat it as a Popish Spirit, and immediately enter into a League offensive and defensive, in order to cover themselves from its Effects. In a word, they seem to be all equally afraid of this pernicious Principle, That it is a just and reasonable Thing to persecute Hereticks for their own Good. To this Point a certain Author testifies, who both had an Opportunity of knowing, and was well acquainted with the Terror all Religions in *England* have of Popery. “ If one, “ says he; should ask me to what Degree different “ Sects are to be tolerated? I answer, that they “ ought all to stand on equal Terms; that they “ should at all Times, and in all Places, be at liberty “ to justify their Faith, by Disputing, by Preaching “ in their Assemblies, and by Publishing Books. “ But Popery ought to be entirely deprived even “ of the Benefit of Toleration, not as a Religion, “ but as a tyrannical Faction, ready to oppress “ others, and so far from being content with an “ Equality, that it is always striving for Domini- “ on, and not only so, but seeks also the utter De- “ struction of such as oppose it*.”

To this Passage from the *Virgil of England*, permit me to add another from an illustrious Defender of Toleration, too much addicted to Philosophy to fall into any Prejudices on the score of Religion. “ Never fear, says he, that the Missionaries should “ quarrel amongst themselves, when the great Bu- “ siness of Dragooning is on foot. The *Thomists*,

* *Milton's Miscellaneous Works.*

“ and

“ and the *Scotists*, the *Molinists* and the *Jansenists*,
 “ forget their Differences, banish their Disputes,
 “ and labour one and all in the Execution of that
 “ Catholick Precept, *Compel them to come in* *.”

One Thing, *Monceca*, surprises me, the Popish *Nazarenes* are by no means ignorant of the Mischiefs induced by their violent Conduct on their Brethren in other Places. They know very well what Reproaches those Brethren of theirs suffer on account of these Persecutions, and of their Lust of Power; and yet, instead of behaving more mildly, they act with greater Rancour than ever, as if they intended to perpetuate Persecutions, instead of putting an end to them. On the other hand, their Antagonists, possessed with the same unaccountable Spight, torment innocent Persons, who have nothing to do with the Cruelties committed by their Brethren. What Connection is there between an *English* Papist and an *Italian* Jesuit? Or why should one be punished for the Faults of the other? It is as absolutely Popish to persecute an honest Roman-Catholick in *Ireland*, as it is to banish a Protestant of *France*. Ought there to be Reprizals in Matters of Religion? What Matter of Triumph! What Subject for Reflection, *Monceca*! doth the unequitable Conduct of the *Nazarene* Sects afford to an honest *Jew*?

Fare thee well, *Monceca*, live content and happy,
Lisbon.

* Bayle, Dictionnaire Historique & Critique, tom. iii.
 P. 339.



L E T T E R CXXXIII.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

IT is not, dear *Isaac*; above four or five Days since I came to *London*. It is therefore impossible for me to give you any just Idea of the Character of the *English*. It is true, I have taken notice of many Things which strike me, and which are certainly worthy the Attention of a Traveller; but as yet I have not had Leisure to look into them sufficiently. There is one Thing which renders it very difficult to characterise the *English*. It is this: They have a great many Virtues, which seem directly opposite to Vices with which they are however tainted. The Contrarieties which one is sure to discern in examining the Manners and the Mode of Thinking amongst these People, appear so extraordinary, that it requires a very serious Examination before one can pretend to assign their good or ill Qualities.

In order to give a true and just Notion of this Nation, it is absolutely necessary to divest one's self of all Prejudices, to forget that one is a *Frenchman*, a *German*, or *Italian*, and to form all our Sentiments of Men by Rules furnished by the Light of Reason. My Opinion is, that a Judge thus qualified, will find in the *English* many great and shining Qualities, though shaded by not a few Follies and Vices. But

as there is no Nation possessed of Worth unabated by some disadvantageous Qualities, so if the Virtues of the *English* are found to be far more considerable than their Faults, we cannot, with any shew of Justice, decry them as a People, or expect that while they are Men, they should not participate of the Frailties to which human Nature is liable.

I see, since I have been here, that the Inhabitants of this Country in general are large, well made, agile, robust People. I perceive likewise, that their exterior Form is in some measure a Picture of their inward Frame of Mind. Many intelligent People have assured me, that the Vigour and Activity of an *English* Genius, is not inferior to the Strength and Nimbleness of an *Englishman's* Body. Of this I shall endeavour to give you Proofs in my subsequent Letters, and promise you to communicate whatever Discoveries I make here, with a Sincerity becoming a Philosopher, to whom Mankind seems to be but one great Nation.

On my Arrival in *London*, I could not but take notice of that Plenty, Magnificence and Contempt of little Things, for which the *English*, as a People, are distinguished when spoken of in other Nations. I likewise observed that Fierceness which Strangers are so apt to call Insolence; and from the best Enquiry I have been able to make into it, I can by no means think it merits so harsh an Appellation.

If one were to judge of the *English* by what is said of them by other Nations, and regulate one's Opinion by theirs, one must fall into very gross Errors. Most of the Relations written by Travellers, are strongly seasoned with that Prejudice against *England*, which however ill founded, is spread but too generally throughout *Europe*. It is true indeed, that the *English* have given some Cause for this, by their common manner of preferring themselves to all

all the rest of Mankind ; an Indecency ever attended with ill Consequences.

This Fault, however, is not peculiar to them ; it is common, in some degree or other, to all Nations. To speak freely, the *English* push it too far, and with too little Reserve. As they are rich and powerful, they think, and sure it is a great Fault, that they are not bound to keep Measures with other People. But notwithstanding this, all the Tales which are daily told of their Brutality and want of Manners, deserve rather Pity than Correction ; and one should rather despise than attempt to confute them. I must allow that the *English* are not very desirous of being acquainted with Strangers ; and when they are acquainted with them, give them every now and then to understand that they are their Betters in every respect ; and I do admit that this Humour is ridiculous. Far be it from me to excuse such an unhappy Oddity of Temper, so contrary to the Rules of Good Manners, and even to those of Reason. But still there is a good deal of Difference between Insolence and a good Opinion of one's self. Where is there a Creature more opinionated and self-conceited than a *French Petit-Maitre* ; and yet who is more civil, more complaisant, or more polite than he ? To say the Truth, the *English*, to their good Opinion of themselves, add the Vanity also of giving others to understand as much, and it is this that renders their Conduct so disgustful.

A Stranger in this Country cannot walk the Streets without hearing the People enter into a Description of him, and blaming whatever he has about his Person differing from themselves. This puts a Traveller unavoidably out of Humour, he cannot with Patience hear his Countrymen injured through his Sides, and himself tacitly censured as
well

well as the rest. When therefore he comes home, he remembers nothing of the good Qualities of the *English*, their Faults only remain fresh in his Memory, and he paints them in such Colours as Spleen and Vengeance furnish him with.

I have done my utmost, *Isaac*, to discover the true Sources of the Pride and Haughtiness of the *English*, their Contempt of other Nations, and particularly of the *French*; and I imagine, that without much Difficulty, I am come at the true Cause. The Refugees, by their own Conduct, have inspired these People with a contemptible Idea of their former Condition, and by Reflection, with high Notions of their own. They who are opulent themselves, and live in the midst of Riches and Abundance, regard with an Eye of Pity, Men struggling with Want; and yet such as in this Country are not blessed with the Goods of Fortune, do not try all Methods, and endeavour at any Rate to better their Condition. On the contrary, satisfied with a little, while they enjoy it with Liberty, they live quietly and chearfully. We see few *Englishmen* going to seek their Fortunes; they blush at the Thoughts of getting Money in the way of some other Adventurers. Their Commerce is their sole Resource; a Way equally reputable to themselves, and useful to their Country. It is not therefore at all strange, that Men who think in this respect so philosophically, should despise People whom they see running all the World over in quest of Money, endeavouring to acquire it by all sorts of Means, even by such as with them pass for shameful and scandalous Methods.

One may venture to affirm, that such of the *English* as are well to pass, are fierce and haughty in right of their Fortunes, and that such as are in a
3
meaner

meaner Condition, are vain and proud, because they know how to be satisfied with their Condition.

The great number of Knights of the Industry which swarm in the City of *London*, contributes not a little to the giving the *English* an ill Opinion of the Foreigners in general, and of the *French* in particular. Such as have never travelled, form their Ideas of Strangers, according to the Conduct of those whom they have seen, judging rashly of the whole Piece by the worst Part of its Selvidge.

This, without doubt, is the Cause of the Contempt these People have for the Inhabitants of every other Country but their own. To this Contempt they join an undisguised Hatred with respect to the *French*. On this head the Men of Quality and the Vulgar have but one way of thinking; indeed it seems to be the Topick on which, of all others, they are best agreed. There are several Reasons which may be offered for this extraordinary Prejudice; the Wars subsisting as it were continually between the two Nations, their particular Interests which almost constantly thwart each other; and to sum up all, Religion, which carries all Things to Extremities whenever it interferes with national Disputes.

If the Differences which have so long reigned between *France* and *England* were of the same Nature with those between the *Germans* and the *French*, the Conclusion of the War would also put an end to the Animosity between the Nations. When People fight for the Glory and Interests of their Sovereigns, as soon as they have received Satisfaction, the thing is at an end; no body thinks of what is past, though it frequently happens that whole Provinces have changed their Masters; the Inhabitants are neither the better nor the worse for it; they lose not either their Estates or their Privileges, but enjoy, under their new Sovereigns, all that they possessed under

their old. But when there is a War between *France* and *England*, it is far from being the sole Concern of Sovereigns. Every private Man has his Share; and as many Merchants as there are in each respective Country, so many Enemies there are. A *French* Ship taken by the *English* is a complicated Act, whereby all the Owners of that Ship and Cargo are injured in their tenderest Concern. Every Burgefs of *St. Malo's*, every Trader of *Dunkirk*, becomes the sworn Enemy of the Merchants of *London*; and on the other Hand, every Captain of a *French* Privateer is a petty Sovereign, and fights in his own Quarrel against the *English* Nation.

The Wars between the Empire and *France* are between Crowned Heads; the Wars between the *French* and the *English* are between particular People, and the ancient Hatred on each Side is strengthened by every new Difference; this is much the stronger on account of Difference in Religion, which of all other Causes most keeps up national Antipathies.

All Men abhor such as would put any Restraint upon their Consciences; but even this Abhorrence grows stronger, when such as are neither our Masters, our Friends, or our Countrymen, pretend to meddle with our Religion. The Retreat of the late King *James II.* into *France*; the Succours given him there; the many Attempts made in his Favour, have provoked the *English* more than a War of twenty Years Duration.

Another thing, which has swelled the Pride and Vanity of that Nation, is the needy and miserable, and of consequence, the mean and submissive State of a multitude of *French* People, who have fled thither from time to time on account of their Religion. I do admit, that Folks who have lost their Estates, who are banished their Country, and have no means of escaping Want, but from the Bounty of the *English*,

lish, are excusable in paying them greater Complaisance than it would be right in other Circumstances to do. But still there are some Bounds to be kept even in this Case, and they ought not to stoop to those outrageous Flatteries which of all things depreciate them most in the Opinions of those whom they flatter.

The *English*, who followed the Fortunes of King *James*, ought to have been Patterns to the *French Refugees*. They were banished, as well as they, they had exactly the same Grounds for Complaint ; and yet distinguishing their Country from those particular Persons who were at the Helm, and were the immediate Instruments and Favourites of King *William*, they were as true *Britons* at *St. Germans* as at *London*.

How is it possible that People who sincerely love their Country, who have a Passion deeply engraven for it in their Hearts, who are capable of maintaining this Spirit, and this true Greatness of Soul, in a strange Country, and under a Load of Misfortunes : How is it possible, I say, that so gallant a People should do otherwise than despise an abject Race of Men, continually decrying the Land of their Nativity, blaming what before they applauded, and blindly approving what they heretofore condemned ? It is certain, my Friend, that this Conduct in the *French* hath in part drawn the Contempt of the *English* upon them. They would have found the same Relief if they had kept up their Spirits under their Misfortunes ; and if they had shewn a Resolution not to sacrifice that Love they ought to have had for their Country, for the sake of a precarious Subsistence, I am confident the *English* would have esteemed them much more than they do.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, and let me often hear from thee.

London.



L E T T E R CXXXIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraite, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

I Begin, dear *Isaac*, to know the *English* Nation well enough now to enter on a distinct Account of them. At present I shall not offer any thing to your View relating to their Nobility, which when I do, I must distinguish into various Classes, but content myself with endeavouring to give you a clear Notion of the rest of the Nation.

The *English* are not such Fools to think Trade a Scandal: Amongst them a Man of Business makes a very considerable Figure, and with Reason; for while he endeavours to enrich himself, he at the same time contributes towards the enriching of his Country. Almost all the Merchants in this Country are the Sons of Knights, or at least of principal Gentlemen; nay, there have been sometimes Lords, who have thought it no Discredit to them that their Brethren and their Children were bred up to Trade.

The Idea which the *English* have of Merchants, renders People of that Denomination quite another sort of Men than they are elsewhere. As there is nothing in their Profession which either damps their Spirits, or debases their Reputation, they think in quite another way than *French, German, Flemish, or Italian* Merchants do. They have as quick Notions of Honour as of Interest, and are no less concerned for

for their Country's being enriched, than for the Increase of their private Fortunes. This is one of the great Causes of the bright Figure which Trade makes in *London*.

There is another Thing peculiar to the Traders in this Country; it is the wise and prudent Use they make of the Riches they acquire. When an *Englishman* hath raised an Estate in Trade, he leaves it off and becomes a Country Gentleman. They are indefatigable for some Years in Business, and then they wisely and contentedly sit down and enjoy the Fruit of their Labours. It seems as if this Nation alone had preserved a just Sense of that Equality which Nature meant to establish among Men. It is not only the Traders do not suffer themselves to be imposed upon by the swelling Sounds of empty Titles, but the very People behave with proper Moderation in this respect, and in their Addresses to the Great, shew nothing of that Fear and slavish Admiration which is so common in all other Countries.

A Lord here is only respected in proportion to the Good he does. If he is a good-natured, easy, affable and generous Person, he is generally esteemed, and meets with all the Marks of Respect he can desire; which are so much the more pleasing, because he well knows he would not receive them, if they were not due to his Merit. If, on the other hand, he has no good Qualities in him, he is looked upon with Indifference, and treated as an useless Member of Society. He enjoys, it is true, the Privileges due to his Rank, and leads just such a Life at *London*, as a discarded Courtier at *Versailles*. I must tell you farther, my Friend, that an *English* Nobleman appears to be more mortified on losing the Regards of his Countrymen, than a *Frenchman* seems to be when in Disgrace with his Prince.

You will the more readily apprehend this, when I tell you, that a strong Passion for Glory, and for the Honour of his Country, is predominant in every *English* Soul.

It is not only in this sort of Conduct towards the Great, that the meaner sort of People resemble the more substantial. It is the same Thing with regard to most of the good and bad Qualities they possess: For the *English* in general being a thinking People, Reason and Common Sense supply, even in the meanest of them, any Defects in their Education.

The Manner in which the People are dressed, is a Demonstration of the Ease in which they live. One sees here an Air of *Abundance*, among even the lowest People; and it is this extraordinary Plenty which makes the Mob insolent, and gives that Air of Fierceness complained of even in those of superior Rank. Self-conceit is the natural Defect of the Inhabitants of this Country. Whatever Situation of Life they are in, they set a high Value upon themselves; for let them live how they will, *they are still Englishmen*, and on this they ground a Kind of indelible Title to Respect.

I told you in my first Letter, that the Virtues and Vices of this Nation are equally great, and that one sees in their Characters astonishing Contradictions: I will now support this Observation by Instances. The *English* have a great and noble Spirit; they detest Treachery; this Generosity of theirs will not allow them to see ~~Combatants on unequal Terms.~~ ^{Combatants on} If a Man in the Streets of *London* should pretend to cane another who had no stick in his Hand, he would be mobbed. But if a Person were indiscreet enough to draw upon a naked Man, the 'Prentice Boys and Journeymen in the Neighbourhood would be tempted, either to pull him to pieces, or throw him into the *Thames*. Such are the

the Effects of this their generous Impetuosity, which seems excusable on account of the Rectitude of their Intentions. But these very People, who cannot endure to see Men engaged on unequal Terms, resemble the ancient *Romans* in their Liking to Gladiators. Is there not something savage in beholding such bloody Spectacles? When they cannot see Men fight, they divert themselves at the Expence of Cocks, Dogs and Bulls. This Ferocity of theirs must be satisfied, and for want of their own Species, they are content to sacrifice Animals to their Humours.

Who can imagine, that a People so cruel and bloody in their Diversions, are notwithstanding humane and charitable in the highest Degree? There are, however, very few among the *English*, who, if their Circumstances allow it, refuse an Alms to the Poor. Nay, they carry the Thing further still; they do not stay till they are asked, the Sight of Indigence is sufficient to move them, and from a Motive of Humanity they give, that they may be easy in themselves.

One of the most singular Differences in the Temper of these People is their Contempt of Trifles, and their excessive Love of what they call the *Fashion*. One cannot but be amazed to see in the same People Sentiments and Inclinations so entirely opposite. To this Oddity I cannot help joining another, which is perhaps as singular, *viz.* their Propensity to Chicane. When one considers the Multitude of Law-suits which are daily decided in *London*, and when one reflects on the Prudence and Good Sense which ~~one~~ every where discovers in the Books and Discourses of the *English*, one is tempted to think, that they talk like *Philosophers*, think like *Pettifoggers*, and act like the *Normans*, from whom, in a great measure, their best Families are

descended. This is certain, that false Witnesses are as plenty here as in *Normandy*. Nay, one would imagine that they had some Respect for them, and were afraid of destroying the Breed; they punish them so slightly in comparison of what they deserve, that a Knight of the Post in *London* is infinitely a safer Employment than a *Jansenist* Bookseller in *Paris*.

As to Religion, every *Englishman* has one of his own Cut. If there was a Proclamation to bring in their Creeds, I do verily believe there would not be two alike. But notwithstanding these Variations in point of Belief, they are incredibly zealous for the particular Sects under the Denomination of which they range themselves. A *Churchman* hates a *Presbyterian* as heartily as a *Jansenist* does a *Jesuit*. The *Presbyterian* pays the *Churchman* in his own Coin, but they unite in detesting a *Papist*, who has in his Turn a cordial Abhorrence for them both *.

How does so whimsical a Behaviour as this agree with the Good Sense of the *English*, and with that Toleration in Matters of Religion which subsists among them? One is forced, when one speaks freely, to confess that there are a kind of Follies which may be stiled national, and that a People ought to be esteemed wise and happy whose Weaknesses are few and favourable. On this Principle, dear *Isaac*, I cannot help saying, that the *English* are very much indebted to Nature. For amongst the different Follies with which all Nations are infected, the *English* have for their Share the lightest, and the least dangerous to Good Sense. With these

* *Inde furor vulgi quod numina vicinorum
Odit quisque locus; cum solos credat habendas
Esse Deos, quos ipse colit.* Juv. Sat. xv.

small Faults, they have great and shining Virtues. We observe amongst them a Constancy which elsewhere passes for philosophick. They have the Courage to declare against old Opinions whenever they discover them to be erroneous; it signifies nothing to tell them that their Fathers thought so and so, and that they ought to revere the Antiquity of any Opinions. This, I say, signifies nothing to them; for no sooner is the Delusion manifest, than they assert their Right of discarding it. It is a common thing to hear an *Englishman* say, We have played the fool as to such or such a thing these two or three hundred Years, it is high time that we should become wiser, and not put it into the power of our Children to make the same Complaints, and with the same Justice, against us, that we do against our Forefathers.

It is certainly, dear *Isaac*, a pleasing Thing to discern in a whole Nation a Disposition to make use of their Reason; and this appears the more extraordinary, when we consider that most other Nations condemn and persecute such as have the Courage to act in this manner.

Another essential Quality in the *English* is their Neglect of Nicety, or, as they call it, Finicalness. A *Petit-Maitre* at *London* is not more the Jest of Men of Sense than of the meanest People. He is regarded by both as a sort of a Marmot, or any other pretty dancing Animal that is shewn at Fairs. You cannot imagine, my Friend, how much I admire this Sagacity. For surely, if Custom did not blunt the Understandings of other Nations, they would see these Triflers in the same Light, and be as well pleased with their Tricks and Grimaces, as with a Monkey's dancing on the Rope.

The *English* are commonly charged with Inconstancy and Fickleness. To say the Truth, their

History is a clear and distinct Proof of the Inequality of their Behaviour towards their Princes. In order to excuse this, they pretend that they have never been wanting in their Duty with respect to their Sovereigns, but when they were forced to it in order to preserve their Rights. If this Assertion of theirs was founded in Truth, one might believe that the Love of Liberty was the Cause of their Revolutions. But notwithstanding all they say in extenuation of their Conduct, it is easy enough to see that this Liberty, of which they talk so much, serves sometimes only for a Pretence to cover their Lightness and Love of Change. Ambitious Men amongst them know how to work on the Credulity of the People, and by filling their Minds with false Fears upon this Subject, conduct the Motions of popular Fury in such a Manner as to lift themselves into the best Places.

To be convinced of the Truth of this, one needs only consider the Revolutions amongst them, as they themselves represent them. We shall see that they have happened under Princes of Characters directly opposite; whence it is plain, that the Conduct of their Princes was not the true Cause. The *English* were equally displeased with the soft and indolent Behaviour of *Henry VI.* and with the bold and enterprizing Temper of *Edward IV.* deposing both these Princes in their Turns; and by an Effect of the same Inconstancy, unknown to every other Nation, they were alike displeased with the Gallantry and Love of Pleasure which distinguished *Charles II.* and the Capacity and Activity which all the World allowed to *William III.* They caballed and plotted against both with the same Obstinacy, though they had set each of them upon the Throne with all possible Marks of Joy and general Satisfaction.

These

These Troubles under Kings so different in their Maxims of Government, shews plainly that the Fault lies in the *English* Nation; and that which still more clearly proves, that the Rights and Liberties of the Nation are not always in question, is, that Revolutions have happened under Kings, who, instead of encroaching upon or violating, have actually conserved and enlarged their Rights by voluntary Concessions. Let us, however, my Friend, acknowledge, that though *English* Sovereigns have not always been in fault, yet have they not on the other hand been always free from Blame.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy.

London.



LETTER CXXXV.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *English*, dear *Isaac*, allow their King such a kind of Power as certain Philosophers attribute to the Deity. The Sovereign, in this Country, may do as much Good as he will, but as for Hurt, that lies pretty much out of his Reach: He may, if he pleases, spare an Offender's Life, but he can take away the Life of no Man. It is the Law, and the legal Judges only, who have the Power of punishing in this Country, where arbitrary Authority can do nothing. The most considerable Employments, however, are in the King, that is, to

say, are in his Gift. He nominate Bishops, and other dignified Clergy. He cannot however remove People from their Offices; that must be done in a legal way. While Men in Place are honest, act up to their Duty, and are, strictly speaking, the Servants of their Country, they have nothing to fear, either from the Inconstancy or evil Disposition of their Princes, who have an absolute Power over none but their domestick Servants.

The King and the State have their separate Rights. It is an established Maxim in *England*, and openly defended by the best Lawyers, that the King has two Superiors, *God* and the *Law*, to whom he owes the same Respect with the meanest of his Subjects*.

Is it not true, said an *Englishman*, a Friend of mine, to me one Day, *that the People were not created to be the Slaves of Princes, and to afford them the cruel Pleasure of tormenting? He must be a Fool who should dare to say, that God created one Man to make others miserable. Since then Kings are appointed not for the Destruction, but for the Preservation of their People, not to do them Evil, but to be their Benefactors, it follows, that like other Men, they must be obedient to the Laws made for the common Good of the Society. If indeed, we could be always sure of having virtuous and wise Kings, there would be no need of circumscribing them within any Bounds, their Probity and Rectitude of Heart would sufficiently limit them, and answer effectually the Intention of these sort of Restrictions. But the Throne is too often filled with Persons who stand in the utmost need of Laws to controul their Wills. How happy had it been for the Romans, if in time they had checked the Cruelties of Tiberius*

* Rex in Regno suo superiores habet Deum & Legem.

Caligula and Nero, and obliged them to quit their Title to Sovereignty, when they took up the scandalous Trade of Tyrants?

Our Kings, continued my Friend, enter into a Contract with us; while they observe the Conditions of it, they have all imaginable respect paid them, they enjoy their Prerogatives in the most ample Manner, and are as absolute in doing good to their People as they can wish. It is true, if they forget their Promises, they run the Hazard of exciting some very dangerous Sedition. But to avoid this, there is no more requisite than that they should keep their Words, and remember, that at their Coronation they swore to observe the Laws, and to see them observed. Why should the People be more bound by their Promises than their Sovereigns? A King who becomes a Tyrant sets his Subjects a bad Example, and teaches them by his own Conduct, to make light of the most sacred and solemn Agreements. But it may be said, that our Lives and Fortunes depend upon our Princes. True, and we ought to sacrifice both in their Quarrels, if they are wise and just. Inasmuch as they are the Fathers of their Subjects, we ought to behave towards them with filial Piety. But such a Submission can only be expected while that reciprocal Relation subsists whence it naturally arises.

If Kings are above the Laws, and if they may dispense with them when they think fit, to what Purpose do they promise that they will observe certain Rules? All that they do upon this head, and all the Assurances that they give, are only Mummeries. When a Prince is crowned, and there solemnly swears to observe certain Rules, we ought, it seems, to look upon this swearing as a mere necessary Form in the Ceremony, not to be omitted for the Sake of Decency, though in Fact it is useless, and serves only to shew that there were Freemen in times past, but that all who live now are, . Slaves.

Slaves. There is no body quite so mad as positively to assert this; the most zealous Defenders of arbitrary Power acknowledge, that a Sovereign ought to keep his Promises, and yet absurdly, and beyond all Comprehension, they conclude that they may violate them with Impunity.

I must confess, my dear *Isaac*, that what this *Englishman* said to me seemed very plausible. In effect, it appears reasonable, that if we assert Kings are bound by their Promises, we should also admit, that it is lawful to disobey them when they break their Words; for it seems to be a necessary Consequence of the mutual Engagements between Sovereigns and their People, that they should no longer subsist when those Conditions are wanting, for the sake of which it was agreed, that this Distinction of Sovereign and Subject should take place. Now it cannot be denied that such as have written with the greatest Warmth against Sedition, have positively asserted that Princes could not violate their Contracts with their People, without being guilty of Injustice. “It must be allowed, says the famous *Grotius* *, that when Princes undertake to govern by certain Rules, their Sovereignty is in some Degree limited and restrained; whether those Obligations regard barely the Exercise of their Power, or directly, and in the first Instance, affect the Power in their Hands. In the first Case, whatever they do contrary to their Promise being an Act of Injustice, every

* *Fatendum tamen id ubi fit arctius quodammodo reddi imperium, seu obligatio duntaxat cadat in exercitium actus, seu etiam directe in ipsam facultatem. Priore specie, actus contra promissum factus erit injustus, quia vera promissio jus dat ei, cui promittitur. Altera autem specie erit etiam nullus defectu facultatis. Hugo Grotius, de Jure Belli & Pacis, tom. 1. p. 121.*

“Pro-

“ Promise vesting a Right in those to whom the
 “ Promise is made. In the other Case, the Act is
 “ unjust and void at the same time, for want of a
 “ legal Power to support it.”

Behold, my dear *Isaac*, a precise Decision by an Author whose Character is above Suspicion. But he explains himself still more clearly in another Place, wherein he seems to have forgot his own System. “ Now, if it be demanded, says he, what
 “ will happen if this Clause be added to the Con-
 “ tract, that in case the King breaks his Word,
 “ he shall forfeit his Title to the Crown? I answer,
 “ that even in this case the Power of the King does
 “ not cease to be absolute, but that he holds his
 “ Power as it were for a time *.”

It seems to me, *Isaac*, that our Author could not well say more against arbitrary Power, and the violating Subjects Rights with Impunity. *Grotius*, however, passes for an Author directly opposite in Sentiments to the Anti-Royalists. And though it may be said in his favour, that there is no Contract between Sovereigns and Subjects, wherein it is expressly stipulated, that the Forfeiture of their Crowns shall attend the breaking of their Words, yet it is too feeble to destroy what he before advanced. For though in these Engagements between Subjects and Kings it be not declared, that by the Violation of the Contract the Prince shall lose his Rights, such a Clause is nevertheless tacitly comprehended in them, because this Contract cannot be relied on, if the People did not reserve to themselves such a Power to enforce it. Without this,

* *Quid si addatur si Rex fidem fallat, ut tum Regno cadat? Ne si quidem Imperium desinet esse summum, sed erit habendi imminutus per Conditionem & Imperium temporario non absimile.* *Grotius de Jure Belli & Pacis*, p. 125.

such

such Engagements would be fruitless; for though they might serve to bind Subjects to their Prince, yet it must be to such a Prince as could not bind himself in return. With respect to all such Conditions, they must either be real and effectual, or vain and useless. But the universal Opinion is, that they are real, and that both Parties are bound to observe them. Well then, both Parties must reserve a Right of forcing the Observation, and therefore, though it be not specified in the Engagements, that Princes when they break them lose their Authority, yet this Clause seems necessary to the Validity and the Security of the Contract.

These Reasons, dear *Isaac*, seem very strong against such as maintain that it is not lawful to take Arms against our Prince. I must own to you, however, that I am thoroughly persuaded the People have no Right to dethrone their Sovereign; I go still farther, for I am of Opinion, that if they had such a Power, the Abuse of it would bring upon them the greatest Miseries.

When we compare the Compacts between Sovereigns and their Subjects to those between private Men, we run into a very great Error. We ought to distinguish between the Promises of Kings, and those of their Subjects; the latter may be compelled to the Performance of their Promises by a temporal Power, because they are subject to Men, but Princes being accountable only to God, are not under the same Predicament. The Engagements into which they enter with their People are not however useless, because they cannot be compelled to adhere to them, inasmuch as they are binding before God, and in that Light Checks to their Wills.

Reason, and the Publick Tranquillity, may both be urged to establish this Doctrine. For if it be admitted,

mitted, that under a Pretence of violating the Laws, Princes may be dethroned, to what Mischiefs and Inconveniencies would all Governments be exposed? The People inconstant, whimsical, wholly inclined to change, would be subject to all Impressions, and be at all times ready to revolt. Restless and unquiet Spirits will always find specious Pretexts to excuse these Seditions and Troubles, so in the end, Peace would be lost. “ I acknowledge, says *Gratius**, that Kings are established to no other end than that they might administer Justice to their Subjects; but it does not follow from hence, that the People are above their Kings. Guardians are assigned without doubt for the Good of their Pupils, and yet this Trust gives a Power to the Guardian over his Ward. I know it will be said, that a Guardian who is guilty of Mal-administration may be discharged from his Trust, from whence some would conclude, that the People have the same Right with respect to the Prince. But the Case is very different; for the Guardian hath a Superior on whom he depends, whereas the Prince has none. As in finite things there cannot be an infinite Progression, so it is absolutely necessary to stop at him, or in Repub-

* *Verum esse post Herodotum, Herodotus post Hesiodum dixit fruendæ Justitiæ causâ Reges constitutos. Sed non ideo consequens est quod illi inserunt Populos Reges esse superiores: nam & Tutela Pupilli causâ reperta est, & tamen Tutela jus est ac potestas in pupillum. Nec est quod instet aliquis Tutelam si male rem pupillarem administret amoveri posse, quare & in rege idem jus esse debere; nam in Tutore hoc procedit que superiorem habet; at in Imperiis quia progressus in infinitum non datur, omnino in aliquâ aut persona aut cætu constituendum est quorum peccata, quia superiorem se judicem non habent, Deus sibi curæ peculiari esse testator. Hugo Grotius, ubi supra, tom. 1. p. 106.*

“ licks

“licks at a Senate independent of all other Powers
“except God.”

If we attentively consider these Reasons, it is impossible, my Friend, that we should not yield to them, and agree that in Contracts between Subjects and Sovereigns, Reason and the publick Good require, that Heaven only should judge of the Infractions of which the latter are guilty.

Those who take upon themselves the Characters of Advocates for the Rights of the People, fancy that the Respect we alledge due to Princes, is the mere effect of Prejudice, which we want Spirit enough to get over. But in this they are deceived, and it is easy to prove the contrary from the Examples of many great Men, who, though born under a Republick, excessively jealous of its Liberty, have nevertheless maintained, that it never can be lawful to take up Arms against Sovereigns, whatever Faults they commit. “We must, says an illustrious *Roman*, bear the Luxury or Avarice of our Governors as we do dear Years, Storms, and other Irregularities in Nature. There will be Vices as long as there are Men, but the Mischiefs flowing from them are neither constant nor perpetual; on the contrary, there are times, in which we are indemnified for these Mischiefs by the Benefits we receive*.”

Is it possible, my Friend, to say, that a Man brought up in the midst of *Rome*, and who had imbibed from his tender Youth Republican Principles, should be persuaded that great Respect is due even to bad Princes through any sort of Prejudice? I cannot

* *Quomodo sterilitatem aut nimios imbres & cetera naturæ mala, ita luxum & avaritiam Dominantium tolerate. Vitia erunt donec Homines, sed neque hæc continua & meliorum interventu pensantur. Tit. Liv. Hist. lib. iv. cap. lxxiv. num. 4.*

believe

believe that any Man living would advance such an Absurdity.

Fare thee well, *Isaac*, may the God of our Fathers give thee continual Prosperity.

London.



LETTER CXXXVI.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

MEN of Quality in this Country are as little attached to the Court, as the meaner sort of People are to them. For as the People shew no Respect to a Lord farther than his Virtues and good Qualities demand, so the Nobility in general adhere to the Court only so long as it appears to have no Designs contrary to the Welfare of the People.

One thing, dear *Isaac*, is very extraordinary in *England*, and that is, to observe a sincere Love for their Country, in Men whose Employments oblige them to be about the Court. In all other Countries, Courtier and Slave are synonymous Terms; and with Reason, the Vices of Princes being as much adored by such Men as their Persons. But here, the Virtue and Probity of the Prince attracts Veneration; when they discern in their Sovereign any Faults which may be prejudicial to their Country, instead of flattering his Defects, they provide the best they can against it.

This

* This Grandeur of Soul is the natural Consequence of the thinking Disposition of the *English*, who, generally speaking, decline Employments, and content themselves with the Pleasures of a private and retired Life. In *France* all the Gentlemen are naturally attached to the Court, even such as live in the Provinces are so accustomed to enjoy little Employments, that without them they cannot believe themselves happy, or in a Situation worthy of their Birth. Among them the Love of their Country is a mere Chimæra. What signifies the Misfortunes of their Countrymen to them, if they can but have the Pleasure of arriving, some Way or other, at an Employment which puts it in their power to revenge themselves upon such as have slighted, mal-treated or injured them, while they were yet but private Men? The *English* think quite otherwise; there is not a Man amongst them who has any Ambition to be the first Slave. The Character of Independency appears more elevated to them than that shining Servitude which charms most Men in the other Courts of *Europe*. In this Country there are many private Men, who would refuse even the highest Posts of Honour, if they were to be attended with the Loss of Freedom of Sentiment, and that Liberty of Action which is their Delight.

It is in *England*, my dear *Isaac*, where it may be said, that Truth is carried even to the Throne, and appears there with Lustre. Happy the Nation since this Custom hath been introduced! The Prince too hath found his Advantage therefrom, by being delivered from those Errors into which Inattention or his Passions betrayed him, by Representations prudent and sincere. No Monarch ever repented of his listening to the Advice of those who set his Faults before him freely and truly, whereas
many

many Kings have been misled, not a few totally destroyed, by listening to base Flatteries. *There is no Condition of Life, says Montaigne, which stands in need of more free and smart Advertisements than that of Sovereign Authority. — Kings frequently find themselves, before they are aware, engaged in the Hatred and Destruction of their People, by Steps they might have easily avoided. — Generally speaking, Favourites look more to their own Affairs than to those of their Masters; and in some measure they are in the right. For to speak the truth, the Liberties of a true Friendship are rude and perilous Attempts when exercised towards a Prince*.*

It is to themselves, my Friend, that Courtiers owe this unlucky Situation, which *Montaigne* so well describes, *the Liberties of a true Friendship are rude and perilous Attempts when exercised towards a Prince.* If they all thought as the *English* do, they would never bring themselves to such a Pass as not to dare to exercise their Reason, and to look upon Truth as a dangerous and impracticable Virtue. They would by this means have preserved a Right of being useful to their Masters, instead of encouraging their Faults, by treating them as so many excellent Qualities.

The same good Sense which hinders Courtiers and Men of Quality from being Slaves in *England* to the Superior Dignity of their Prince, teaches them also how to support their own Quality, without suffering their Grandeur to turn their Heads. We very rarely see here Men magnificently dressed assuming high Airs of State, speaking in an elevated Tone, talking everlastingly of their Birth, their Dependents, their Horses, strutting a tiptoe, hoisting their Shoulders up, taking Snuff, adjusting their Perukes, and then deciding peremptorily, and with

* *Montaigne's Essays, Book III.*

the Air of an Oracle on Things of the utmost Importance, smiling or singing while one is talking to them, and seldom deigning to make an Answer in more than two Words. A Man of this Character, I say, is not commonly met with at *London*; and when he is, these affected Airs, which would make him seem somebody in another Place, render him here hateful to the Populace, and ridiculous to his Equals.

Ignorance is a Vice which has very few Partizans in this Country, even among Men of Quality. Instead of blushing at a strict Application to the Sciences, they shew the utmost Contempt for such as conceive it a declining the Privilege of Nobility to trouble themselves with more Knowledge than that of being able to read tolerably and write a common Letter. In more Countries than one, a Man that with a certain Air can say a pleasant thing, is looked upon as a fine Fellow; in *England* he would be stiled a Blockhead without Mercy, because there Things receive their Value from the Worth; a Lord who can sing and talk Nonsense to a Woman, is in that Country a Coxcomb. He who has these Phrases everlastingly in his Mouth, *A Man of my Quality, a Person of my Birth*, is laughed at and derided. Had he all the Quality of the *Venetian* Senate put together, and nothing else to recommend him, he would meet but with little Esteem at *London*.

It is in that Country absolutely necessary to have Merit in order to have Credit. Nobility has indeed Privileges, but those Privileges are merely honorary. A Lord who is incapable of distinguishing himself by his Parts, must console himself with them as well as he can. A *Swiss* Author introduces a Lord describing his own Situation very emphatically, that is, such a Lord as hath nothing but what he derives

rises from his Birth. *It is true, says he, we cannot be arrested for our Debts, but then it is but here and there we can find Credit. Instead of an Oath, we say upon our Honours; but to balance this, we are seldom believed: There is indeed a Law to prevent People from speaking ill of us; but if his Lordship is too busy with his Cane, his Lordship may be beat*.* It is true, dear Isaac, all this must not be literally taken, but however, it is sufficient to shew, that in *England*, how great soever a Man's Quality is, he must have Merit also to render him considerable. You need not therefore be surprized at seeing more Men of Quality Patrons of the Sciences in this Country than elsewhere; Ambition and the Desire of Glory excite in them quite different Passions than are felt by Men of their Rank in other Countries, where their Heads are turned to other Things. A *Frenchman* thinks himself illustrious enough in right of his Coaches, Horses, Domesticks, Furniture and fine Clothes; an *Englishman* admits, that these have nothing to do with Merit, and that all these Trifles do not contribute to raise his Character in the least.

There is yet another Reason which forces People of Distinction in this Country to cultivate Sciences and the *Belles Lettres*. It is the Necessity they are under of understanding ancient and modern Policies, which is a kind of Knowledge for which they find frequent occasion. Not only Lords, but all Men of such a Rank as hope for any Employments, are obliged to be well versed in History and Politics. *In England, says an illustrious Author, Men commonly think, and Learning is even in greater Credit there than here. This Advantage is the natural Consequence of their Form of Government; there are in London near seven or eight hundred Persons who*

* *Muralt's Letters on the English Nation.*

have

have a Right to speak in publick, and to support the Interest of the Nation. At least, five or six thousand pretend to this Honour in their Turns. All the rest pretend to judge of the Behaviour of this People. Every Man may print what he thinks fit on publick Affairs. Thus the whole Nation is under a Necessity of knowing more than any other Nation. One hears nothing talked of but the Government of Rome and Athens. A Man is forced, whether he will or will not, to read the Authors who treat of these Things; this Study naturally leads a Man to the Belles Lettres. In short, every Man is a sort of a Statesman. How comes it, that our Magistrates, our Lawyers, our Physicians, our Ecclesiasticks, have more Learning, a better Taste, and a greater Share of Wit than the rest of the French Nation? Is it not truly, because their Condition of Life requires a greater Cultivation of the Mind*?

See then, dear *Isaac*, the essential Cause of the difference there is between *English* and *French* Courtiers. The first need nothing to recommend them but Patience, Suppleness, and a little Court-Craft. On the contrary, the latter cannot succeed but in right of superior Knowledge, good Sense and requisite Learning; these, and these only, being the Arts by which Rivals are to be overcome.

Before I finish my Letter, I must take notice to you, dear *Isaac*, of one of the Privileges of the Nobility in this Country. Whoever ventures to libel them, is liable to suffer deeply in his Pocket. This is settled by an express Law†; and I have been told on this Subject a whimsical Story: The Son of a rich Inn-keeper having been lucky enough to please the Wife of a Man of Quality, did not apprehend that

* *Voltaire's Letters, Lett. xx.*

† He means the Action of *Scandalum Magnatum*.

this

this Law could prove any Bar to his Endeavours in this way. He had the good Luck to succeed in his Amour, and the Lord had the good Luck, if it can be so called, to find it out; upon which he used means to procure a Divorce, but failing of the necessary Proof in the proper Court, he was forced to content himself with recovering Damages against the Inn-keeper's Son: Since this Affair it is a settled Point, that a Man fails in his respect to the Nobility, when he becomes too agreeable to their Wives. However, there are some arch People who scruple not to say, that there are sprightly Fellows who will ogle Women of Quality, though at the Hazard of their Fortunes. If the Men of Title in *Italy* had any Privilege of this sort, I dare say they would be as tender of it as the *English* are of their Liberty*.

Adieu, dear *Isaac*, may the God of our Fathers cover thee with Blessings.

London.

* Our Author hath been not a little mistaken in this Matter, which is the only Story, of the D. of N. suing Sir John Germaine, who was an Inn-keeper's Son at the Hague, not on the Statute of Scan. Mag. but on an Action of the Case, for criminal Conversation with his Dutches.



L E T T E R CXXXVII.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constanti-
nople.

I HAVE read, my dear *Isaac*, the Relation of a Prodigy inserted in an * historical Journal, and I find in it some Things so particular, that I persuade myself you will concur with me in Opinion, that the Facts contained therein are absolutely irreconcilable to Philosophic Speculations, and all the Efforts of the reasoning Faculty. I will first give you a faithful Extract of what I have read, and then my sincere Opinion of the supernatural Things therein contained.

“ We have had in this Country a new Scene of
 “ Vampirism; which is duly attested by two Officers
 “ of the Tribunal of *Belgrade*, who took Cogni-
 “ zance of the Affair on the Spot, and by an Officer
 “ in his Imperial Majesty’s Troops at *Gradisch* (in
 “ *Slavonia*) who was an Eye-witness of the Pro-
 “ ceedings.

“ In the Beginning of *September* there died at
 “ the Village of *Kisilova*, three Leagues from *Gra-*
 “ *disch*, an old Man of above threescore and two :
 “ Three Days after he was buried he appeared in
 “ the Night to his Son, and desired he would give
 “ him somewhat to eat. The Son did so, the
 “ Father eat, and then disappeared. The next

* *Mercuré Historique et Politique*, Octob. 1736. p.
 403—411.

“ Day the Son told his Neighbours these Particu-
 “ lars. That Night the Father did not come, but
 “ the next Evening he made him another Visit,
 “ and desired something to eat. It is not known
 “ whether his Son gave him any Thing or not,
 “ but the next Morning the young Man was found
 “ dead in his Bed. The Magistrate or Bailiff of
 “ the Place had Notice of this, as also that the
 “ same Day five or six Persons fell sick in the Vil-
 “ lage, and died one after the other. He sent an
 “ exact Account of this to the Tribunal of *Bel-*
 “ *grade*, and thereupon two Commissioners were
 “ dispatched to the Village attended by an Execu-
 “ tioner, with Instructions to examine closely into
 “ the Affair. An Officer in the Imperial Service,
 “ from whom we have this Relation, went also
 “ from *Gradisch*, in order to examine personally an
 “ Affair of which he had heard so much. They
 “ opened in the first place the Graves of all who
 “ had been buried in six Weeks. When they came
 “ to that of the old Man, they found his Eyes
 “ open, his Colour fresh, his Respiration quick
 “ and strong, yet he appeared to be stiff and insen-
 “ sible. From these Signs they concluded him to be
 “ a notorious *Vampire*. The Executioner there-
 “ upon, by the Command of the Commissioners,
 “ struck a Stake through his Heart; and when they
 “ had so done, they made a Bonfire, and therein
 “ consumed the Carcase to Ashes. There was no
 “ Marks of Vampirism found on his Son, or on
 “ the Bodies of the other Persons who died so
 “ suddenly.

“ Thanks be to God, we are as far as any
 “ People can be from giving into Credulity, we
 “ acknowledge that all the Lights of Physick do
 “ not enable us to give any Account of this Fact;
 “ nor do we pretend to enter into its Causes.

“ How-

G 2

“ However, we cannot avoid giving Credit to a
 “ Matter of Fact juridically attested by competent
 “ and unsuspected Witnesses, especially since it is far
 “ from being the only one of the kind. We shall
 “ here annex an Instance of the same sort in 1732,
 “ already inserted in the *Gleaner*, No. 18.

“ In a certain Canton of *Hungary*, which is cal-
 “ led in Latin *Oppida Heidonum*, on the other Side
 “ the *Tibiscus*, vulgarly called the *Teyffe*; that is to
 “ say, the River which washes the celebrated Ter-
 “ ritory of *Tokay*, as also a Part of *Transilvania*.
 “ The People known by the Name of *Heydukes* be-
 “ lieve that certain dead Persons, whom they call
 “ Vampires, suck the Blood of the Living, inso-
 “ much that these People appear like Skeletons,
 “ while the dead Bodies of the Suckers are so full of
 “ Blood, that it runs out at all the Passages of their
 “ Bodies, and even at their very Pores. This odd
 “ Opinion of theirs they support by a Multitude of
 “ Facts attested in such a Manner, that they leave
 “ no room for doubt. We shall here mention
 “ some of the most considerable.

“ It is now about five Years ago, that a certain
 “ *Heyduke*, an Inhabitant of the Village of *Medreiga*,
 “ whose Name was *Arnold Paul*, was bruised to
 “ Death by a Hay-Cart, which ran over him.
 “ Thirty Days after his Death, no less than four
 “ Persons died suddenly, in that manner wherein,
 “ according to the Tradition of the Country, those
 “ People generally die who are sucked by Vampires.
 “ Upon this a Story was called to Mind, that this
 “ *Arnold Paul* had told in his Life-time, viz. that
 “ at *Cossova* on the Frontiers of the *Turkish-Servia*,
 “ he had been tormented by a Vampire; (now the
 “ established Opinion is, that a Person sucked by a
 “ Vampire, becomes a Vampire himself, and sucks
 “ in his Turn.) But that he had found a way to
 “ rid

“ rid himself of this Evil, by eating some of the
 “ Earth out of the Vampire’s Grave, and rubbing
 “ himself with his Blood. This Precaution how-
 “ ever did not hinder his becoming a Vampire; in-
 “ somuch that his Body being taken up forty Days
 “ after his Death, all the Marks of a notorious
 “ Vampire were found thereon. His Complexion
 “ was fresh, his Hair, Nails, and Beard were
 “ grown; he was full of fluid Blood, which ran
 “ from all Parts of his Body upon his Shroud. The
 “ *Hadnagy* or *Bailiff* of the Place, who was present
 “ at the taking of him up, and who was a Person
 “ well acquainted with Vampirism, caused a sharp
 “ Stake to be thrust, as the Custom is, through the
 “ Heart of *Arnold Paul*, and also quite through his
 “ Body; whereupon he cried out dreadfully as if he
 “ had been alive. This done, they cut off his Head,
 “ burnt his Body, and threw the Ashes thereof into
 “ the *Sarve*. They took the same Measures with
 “ the Bodies of those Persons who had died of
 “ Vampirism, for fear that they should fall to suck-
 “ ing in their Turns.

“ All these prudent Steps did not hinder the same
 “ Mischief from breaking out again about five
 “ Years afterwards, when several People in the
 “ same Village died in a very odd Manner. In the
 “ space of three Months, seventeen Persons of all
 “ Ages and Sexes died of Vampirism, some sud-
 “ denly, and some after two or three Days suffer-
 “ ing. Amongst others there was one *Scarnofka*,
 “ the Daughter of a *Heyduke*, whose Name was
 “ *Jovitzo*, who going to Bed in perfect Health,
 “ waked in the middle of the Night, and making
 “ a terrible Outcry, affirmed that the Son of alcer-
 “ tain *Heyduke*, whose Name was *Mirko*, and who
 “ had been dead about three Weeks, had attempt-
 “ ed to strangle her in her Sleep. She continued

“ from that time in a languishing Condition, and
 “ in the Space of three Days died. What this
 “ Girl had said, discovered the Son of *Millo* to be
 “ a Vampire. They took up the Body, and found
 “ him so in effect. The principal Persons of the
 “ Place, particularly the Physician and Surgeons,
 “ began to examine very narrowly, how, in spite
 “ of all their Precautions, Vampirism had again
 “ broke out in so terrible a Manner. After a strict
 “ Inquisition, they found that the deceased *Arnold*
 “ *Paul* had not only sucked the four Persons before
 “ mentioned, but likewise several Beasts, of whom
 “ the new Vampires had eaten, particularly the
 “ Son of *Millo*. Induced by these Circumstances,
 “ they took a Resolution, of digging up the Bo-
 “ dies of all Persons who had died within a certain
 “ Time. They did so, and amongst forty Bodies,
 “ there were found seventeen evidently Vam-
 “ pires. Through the Hearts of these they drove
 “ Stakes, cut off their Heads, burnt the Bodies,
 “ and threw the Ashes into the River. All the
 “ Informations we have been speaking of were ta-
 “ ken in a legal Way, and all the Executions were
 “ also so performed, as appears by Certificates
 “ drawn up in full Form, attested by several Offi-
 “ cers in the neighbouring Garrisons, by the Sur-
 “ geons of several Regiments, and the principal In-
 “ habitants of the Place. The verbal Process was
 “ sent towards the latter End of last *January* to the
 “ Council of War at *Vienna*, who thereupon esta-
 “ blished a special Commission to examine into these
 “ Facts. Those just now mentioned were attested
 “ by the *Hadnagi Barriarar*, the principal *Hoyduke*
 “ of the Village, as also by *Battur*, first Lieute-
 “ nant of Prince *Alexander* of *Wirtemberg*, *Plick-*
 “ *stenger*, Surgeon Major of the Regiment of *Fur-*
 “ *stemberg*,

“ *Stemberg*, three other Surgeons of the same Regiment, and several other Persons.”

I thought proper, my dear *Isaac*, to lay before you all the strange Stories that have been related of Vampires, that you might the better judge of the Matter, and that the Circumstances of one Story might serve to enlighten another. I shall impatiently expect your Sentiments, and in the mean time shall give you my own freely.

There are two different Methods whereby the Falsity of this Opinion, that dead Persons can return and suck the living, may be demonstrated; that is to say, the Fact may be shewn to be impossible. First, by explaining by the means of physical Causes all that is attributed to Vampirism; and secondly, by denying totally the Truth of these Stories, which I take to be the safest and wisest way. But inasmuch as the Names of the Persons who have signed this Relation give such an Authority thereto, as serves to render it credible; I shall, before I proceed to shew how little Respect is due to these Authorities in Philosophical Matters, admit that several Persons have died of that Malady, which is called Vampirism.

I lay this down as a Principle, that it is possible to find Bodies, which after having been some Days interred, have fluid Blood in their Veins; I likewise assert that it is an easy Matter for People to fancy that they have been sucked by Vampires, and so to terrify themselves by these Apprehensions, as in a short time to die of Fright: For having their Heads full all Day of these strange Stories, what Wonder is it, if at Night, and in their Dreams, these Ideas should still disturb their Imagination, and produce that Effect which Terror often produces, immediate or consequential Death? How often have we seen Persons die away on the News of some terrible Misfortune?

fortune? How frequently has even excessive Joy produced the same Effect?

In examining the Story of the Death of these pretended Martyrs to Vampirism, I discover all the Marks of an epidemick Fanaticism; and I see clearly that the Impressions of their own Fears was the true Cause of their Destruction. Mark the Story of the *Heyduke's* Daughter; she went to Bed well, awakened in the middle of the Night, cried out that she had been attacked by a Vampire, named a certain dead Person she had been thinking of, continued in a languishing Condition for some Days, and then died. Whoever has Eyes, and ever so little Notion of Philosophy, will easily discern that this pretended Vampirism is the pure Effects of a heated Imagination. Here is a Girl who, by her crying out, pretends to have avoided being sucked by a Vampire; certain it is that she escaped the three other Nights, when to be sure there were People who sat up with her. Is not this a clear and demonstrative Proof, that she did not die of Vampirism, but of Terror, Apprehension and Melancholy?

Those who have been in Places afflicted with the Plague, know by Experience what strange Consequences Fear can produce. The Moment a Man is a little out of Order, he takes it for granted that he is struck with the epidemick Malady, and this alarms him so much, that it is ten to one if he escapes. The *Chevalier de Maisin* told me at *Paris*, that being at *Marseilles* when the Plague raged there, he actually knew an Instance of a Woman's dying with Fear on her Maid's being seized with an Ague, which she took for the Plague. This Woman's Daughter also fell into a mortal Illness from the same Cause. Two other Persons in the same House took their Beds, sent for a Physician, and

and told him they had the Plague. The same Physician visited the Maid-Servant, and the rest of the Persons who were sick, and assured them that none of them had the Plague, advised them to rise, to go about the House, and to live as they were wont, and not to frighten themselves. But with respect to the Mistress of the Family, his Care was all in vain, for in the space of two Days, as I have told you, she died of mere Apprehension.

Let me now, my Friend, examine the first Relation, That of the young Man who died by being sucked by his dead Father; be pleased to consider the Circumstances, and you will see that he died in truth of Fear, of Folly, or of the Vapours. The Story he told his Neighbours the first Morning, is a Proof that his Imagination was disturbed, and that he was excessively frightened. This first Attack of his ill-grounded Fear, served to distemper his Reason, and to render him less able to resist the next Return of his Pannick. Accordingly, when it did surprize him, it produced the Effect which might naturally be expected; it overcame his animal Spirits, and deprived him of Life. You will take Notice, my dear *Isaac*, that this did not happen the next Night, very probably for this Reason, because his Neighbours watched with him, and thereby kept up his Courage; or, in other Words, parried the Attack.

I come next to speak of the dead Bodies which were found full of Blood, their Beards, Nails, and Hair of their Heads grown, and all the other Circumstances. Of all these strange Things, if we admit the Truth of any part, we shall be as complaisant as can be expected; for to be sure the greatest part of the Circumstances were pure Imagination. All Philosophers know how ready the People in general are, and even what a Propensity

there is in some Historians to magnify whatever has the Air of being supernatural. However; not to insist too much upon this, it is far from being impossible to account physically for these Circumstances.

Experience teaches us, that there are certain Earths which have a Property of preserving Bodies put into them for a long Time as fresh as when they were put into the Ground. The Reasons of which have been so often stated, that it would be tedious, and at the same time needless in me to repeat them. At *Thoulouse* there is a Vault belonging to the Church of a Monastery, where dead Bodies remain so entire, that even after two hundred Years Continuance there, they seem as fresh as when first buried; they set them against the Wall in their ordinary Clothes, and they look as if they were alive. What is still more extraordinary, Bodies buried on the other Side of the Vault, become Food for Worms in a Day or two at most.

As to the growing of the Nails, the Hair, and the Beard, the same Thing is frequently observed in dead Bodies in all Places. So long as there remains any Moisture in the Body, we need not be surprized if those Parts grow which require only Moisture to supply them.

The Fluidness of the Blood, and its being found liquid in the Veins, seems the greatest Difficulty; and yet even this may be so well accounted for by physical Causes, as to shut out all Necessity of having recourse to Miracles. With respect to this, I say, that the Heat of the Sun rarifying the nitrous Damps in the Graves, where the Bodies lie, enables thereby many of those nitrous Particles to insinuate themselves into the Body, where entering the Blood, and causing a Fermentation, they may dissolve that
Coagulum

Coagululum occasioned by Death, and make it by degrees, not flow indeed, but become liquid in the Veins. This is the more probable, because something like it may be performed by a very easy Experiment. For if we boil in a Pipkin two Parts of Milk, with one of Oil of Tartar, the Liquor will become red, because the Salts in the Tartar dissolve the oily Parts in the Milk, and turn it into a kind of Blood; it is true that Blood is naturally of a more florid Colour, but it differs very little in Consistence. There is therefore nothing impossible in this Supposition, that the Juices in the dead Body, by nitrous Particles fermenting with them, may furnish a Liquor nearly resembling Blood; especially if we consider that these Juices in their natural State are very oily, and consequently must by such a Fermentation be of a very high Colour.

You see, dear *Isaac*, that without absolutely denying every Particular in the Certificates, it is very possible to rid ourselves of the strangest Circumstances in these Stories. To say the Truth, it would be ridiculous to give any Credit to them, however attested; For either these Vampires actually go out to suck, or they do not. If they go out, then they must be visible, or they must be invisible, as it should seem they are; for upon coming to the Assistance of those who cry out, there is nothing to be seen. It follows then that the Bodies do not go out. This Point being gained, we must suppose that it is the Soul. Now the Soul is either spiritual, or composed of a very subtile Matter; shall we suppose then, that in this subtile Matter the Blood is carried to the Grave, and there poured into the Body? Is not this sending the Soul of a strange Errand? To say the Truth, my dear *Isaac*, I am ashamed to spend so much Time in exposing

posing Vampirism; and find myself precisely in the Situation of that *Nazarene Doctor*, who said, that he blushed for those whom he refuted, and at the Necessity he was under of speaking to them in such Terms *. I told you at first, that there was very small heed to be given to these wonderful Certificates, which when thoroughly examined, have really very little Authority.

Farewell, *Isaac*, live well, contented and happy.

London.



L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraise, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THERE are in this Country, dear *Isaac*, as many different Sects as in *Holland*. The *English* are too jealous of their Liberty to submit to the Necessity of thinking in one Way, or to be with-held from striking out now and then, to see what sort of Country the Land of Error is. They will make use of their Reason in all their Actions,

* *Sed jam pudet me ista refellere, dum eos non puduerit ista sentire. Cum vero ausi sint etiam ea defendere, non jam eorum, sed ipsius Generis humani, me pudet, cujus aures hac ferro potuerunt. Aug. Epist. LVI.*

and

and can by no means think of becoming Slaves to the Notions of some particular Divines.

Though every Man be at liberty in *England* to follow what Religion he pleases, yet what is emphatically called the *Church* prevails. The King, and all the People of Quality almost, are Members thereof, and some of them zealous enough. It is requisite to profess one's self a Churchman, in order to possess any Office or Employment in the State in *England* or *Ireland*. The very Name implies that it is the chief Faith, and as it were the Religion of the State. The Nonconformists however do not usually call it the Church, or its Members Churchmen, but cavalierly enough the Partizans of the Bishops; for whatever the *English* may have borrowed from the Sentiments of *Calvin*, their Common-Prayer, and their Church Ceremonies, favour not at all of that Divine; on the contrary, they come nearer to the Church of *Rome*, especially in their Cathedral Worship, which hath a very great Resemblance thereto. The Bishops, who are in number twenty-six, have their Archdeacons, who have Jurisdiction over the Priests in their Dioceses. All the Clergy, of whatever Degree, are very exact in receiving their Tithes, and other ecclesiastical Dues; these, however popish, they conscientiously retain, and very piously fenced against the Reformation's breaking in here. The Bishops have even a Seat in the House of Lords; but as the Canon Law does not permit them to give their Voices in Matters of Blood, so when their Enemies are to be destroyed, they can do no more than cabal against them.

While the *English* were yet in the Humour of burning Protestants for the Glory of God, the single Determination of one of these Pontiffs sent a Man to the Stake. At present there is nothing like

like this, People of all Religions are safe from Fire, though not from the Rage of the Ecclesiasticks. The Priests of the different Sects hate one another mortally, and their ill Humour frequently diffuses itself through their Flocks. There have been some Bishops who would have given ten Years Revenue to have indulged themselves their full Swing in persecuting the Nonconformists; as these again, on the other hand, would be infinitely overjoyed, could they but absolutely extinguish Episcopacy, and destroy that priestly Pomp, the Sight of which they bear with so much Pain. For you must know, that notwithstanding the fundamental Points are the same with Churchmen, and with Presbyterians, yet that Heat with which they espouse those Differences, which all of them own to be unessential, is so violent, that it has sometimes come to shedding of Blood. Thus by an incomprehensible Madness, at the same time that the Papists ardently endeavour the Destruction of all Protestants, Protestants themselves contribute to facilitate their Designs by mutually destroying each other, or at least contributing to each other's Destruction; only because they are called by the different Names of *Churchmen* and *Presbyterians*. You may very possibly be desirous of knowing what are the Sources of these Divisions; it is by chance in my Power to give you some Account of this Matter, especially in respect to the *French* and *Walloon* Presbyterian Refugees in *England*.

I was going the other Day with one of my Friends by the *French* Church, he desired I would go in and hear the Sermon: You know it is a Custom with me to go into the Places of Devotion of all Sects, in order the better to comprehend their Doctrines, and their Ceremonies; I therefore readily agreed to his Proposal, and in we went. F

was

was perfectly ravished with the modest and sober Beginning of the Preacher's Discourse; yet before he had well opened it, I heard a prodigious Noise in the Church. All who were present began to act like the Convulsionists in France, one coughed, another sneezed; some shook their Heads, most of them put their Hands to their Hats; but above all, some People in a Gallery over-against me seemed to lose all sort of Patience; they spread out their Arms, and put themselves into such ridiculous Postures, that I could not forbear asking my Friend what was the matter: But guess my Surprize, when on turning towards him, I saw him playing Tricks like the rest. *Lord bless me,* said I, *what is the matter? Is it thus you behave in a Place of Publick Worship! Let us go out,* said he, *I find it is impossible for me to keep my Temper, or to avoid giving a publick Testimony of the just Sense I have of the Affront offered to our Church.* Upon this, up he started, and out he went, followed by at least three Fourths of the Congregation. *Pray tell me,* said I, *when we were in the Street, what this Matter is? Is there in your Religion any Feasts which approach the ancient Bacchanalia, or have your Priests the Power of turning your Heads before they have well opened their Mouths? Ah! that Preacher,* said he, *hath violated one of our most sacred Rites; I will tell you his Crime; he had the Assurance to preach without putting on his Hat.* Bless me, replied I, *what great Harm was there in that? Would his Doctrine have been a grain the worse on this Account? Do you think that having a Hat on alters a Man's Thoughts, or that it gives him clearer or brighter Ideas, than if his Head was uncovered? I now begin to understand what you all meant by clapping your Hands to your Hats; at first I must own that I thought you were all distracted. It were to*
be

be wished, said my Friend, that we had still had less Patience, and that we had ordered the Man to hold his Tongue; what will the World say, when they shall hear what has passed at our Worship To-day? They will think us a sort of amphibious Creatures; they will expect next to see us go to the established Church: This comes of the Folly of letting strange Ministers preach without acquainting them with the Rules and Orders of our Congregation.

Surprized at what I heard, I could not help saying, And do you place this among the Number of the Grievances which keep you out of what the People call here the Church? Yes! said he hastily, I do; their Bowing, their Vestments, their Surplices, and their Episcopal Robes are like this, and all impure Rags of Popery. It seems then, returned I, that you dispute warmly about Trifles. How is it possible, that you who look upon all Ceremonies as indifferent, should notwithstanding believe there is any thing in a Man's wearing a longer or a shorter Garment, in his appearing in a black Robe or a white? Did your Legislator, and his primitive Disciples, leave you Patterns for Clothes? Is there any thing in your sacred Books about how many Ells of Stuff are to enter into a Priest's Garment?

My Pleasantries were very far from pleasing my Friend, who was a zealous Presbyterian. I see, says he, you affect to justify the Church, yet let me tell you, that you act in this contrary to the Jews, who follow our Custom in their Synagogue. That is true, said I, because it is our Custom, and universally received amongst the Israelites. We act in this respect uniformly in all Countries where the People dress in Wigs, and where they dress in Turbans; amongst the Turks, the Persians, &c. we never uncover our Heads. But we look upon this purely as a Civil Rite, and not at all as a Thing essential to Religion.

You

You do well, replied my Friend, *you have a Right to act as you please, and so have we; while there are French and Walloon Presbyterians, there will, Thanks be to God, be found Men who will stick to their own Customs, and preach with their Hats on, in spite of all the lordly Prelates upon Earth.* Saying this, he turned about, and left me abruptly, and with an Air of Discontent.

You must not be surprized, my dear *Isaac*, at this want of Decorum in my Friend, or at the Intemperance of his Zeal. The Presbyterians in general are excessively prejudiced in favour of their Mode of Worship, and of all their Customs. They are morose and very petulant, and have no sort of Complaisance, if you attempt in the veriest Trifle to put them out of their way. The greater Credit their Adversaries have, the greater Obstinacy they put on. It would be an easier Task to persuade the Jansenists to accept the Bull *Unigenitus*, than to persuade the Presbyterians to put their Hats on when the Psalms are sung, or to put them off, when they are only read. Behold, dear *Isaac*, for what Whimfies these People contend. A Man must be very fond of the Title of Nonconformity, who merely for the Sake thereof would refuse to quit such ridiculous Customs.

You must not fancy that the Churchmen in this Country, are a grain more reasonable or less whimsical. If one of their Preachers was to put on his Hat, it would put his whole Congregation in a Flame; and they had rather see all the Nonconformists in the Universe perish, than shew them so much brotherly Love and Tendernefs as to part with their Surplice, or the several Genuflexions of their Clergy in the Celebration of Divine Service. You are an obstinate Crew, say they imperiously to the Presbyterians, who will not be persuaded to
listen

listen to the Church in Things which are confessedly indifferent. You are Persecutors, reply the Presbyterians fiercely, inasmuch as you would tyrannically subject us to Customs of human Invention. It is precisely because they are indifferent, that you are inexcusable, because while you confess them to be such, you would compel us to receive and to submit to them, though we know this to be a Thing indifferent.

The Dress and Countenances of the Presbyterians, especially of their Preachers, answers exactly their true Character; they walk gravely, and with a very stiff Air; their Heads and Faces are in a manner hid by overgrown Hats, and their Shoulders covered with a most enormous large Cloak. If one of these Reverend Persons was to appear at *Paris*, he would be taken for some grave old Divine, who by appealing to some future Council, had embarrassed himself with his Bishop, and was in absolute Disgrace at Court.

A Clergyman of the Church is quite another Creature; he is dressed in a light easy Cassock, tied with a Surcingle; over this he wears a large flowing and magnificent Robe, very gracefully gathered on his Shoulders into a hundred Plaits; a good Wig well powdered, or light enough to want none, sets off his Face, and an excellent good Beaver with a comely Hat-band and Rose surmount this. Thus equipped, they resemble strongly the better sort of Ecclesiasticks in *France*, who pique themselves upon Dress, and are frequently to be met with in great Cities, haughty, superb, and scornful. Such a Clergyman looks down on other Mortals as pitiful Insects scarce worthy of his Attention, considering himself as already a Bishop, and in consequence thereof a Member of the House of Lords. Glad at his heart to see the
Presby-

Presbyterians express a Dislike at his Grandeur, laughing within himself to think that this very Dislike keeps them out of the Road of acquiring it; and instead of desiring to unite him and the rest of the Nonconformists to the Faith he professes, he thinks of nothing but forcing their Obedience; which without Ceremony he practises whenever it lies in his Power. In a word, fierce and untractable, because he is of the established Religion, he would have all Things bend before him; and to paint him to the Life, do but figure to yourself, *Isaac*, a Jesuit, who to convert all the Protestants in the World, would not part with a single Lamp which burns before the Image of *St. Ignatius*, the Chief and Lawgiver of his Order!

I own that when I left *Paris*, I thought I had lost for ever the *Jansenists* and the *Molinists*; but since my Arrival in *England*, I have found them again in the Churchmen and Dissenters, who have copied them so perfectly, that if Miracles were in fashion here, as in *France* and in *Italy*, I should not question in the least seeing now and then an *English* Prelate canonized, for having been zealous in persecuting *Non Cons*, or many Dissenters in Convulsions at the Grave of some Saint *Paris* of their own Fraternity.

The *English* make a Jest of the religious Disputes which at this Day divide *France*, and they have certainly Reason. There cannot be a greater Weakness, or a more flagrant Sign of Superstition amongst any Nation, than their being the Dupes of the Hatred, Ambition, and false Faith of certain bold Ecclesiasticks, who under pretence of enlightening certain Points of Doctrine, disturb Society, and in the End interest the State in their petty Quarrels. After all, are not the *English* however in the same Condition with the *French*? Are not

not the Church Divines as desirous of inflaming their Zealots against the Nonconformists? If it depended upon them, will they not force all the World to blind Obedience, even though it were at the Expence of half Mankind? And not they infinitely delighted with that Share they have in the Government, and do they not make the utmost Use of it they are able? In short, Can there be found a more perfect Copy of the *French Jesuit*, than in the *English High-Churchman*? Or can two People resemble each other more than the *Presbyterian* and the *Jansenist*? These last are equally obstinate in their Opinions; they declaim constantly and loudly against all Honours and Preferments, with which however it is impossible that either should be troubled. They affect a morose Air, a Twang through the Nose in Preaching, a kind of *Querpo* Dress, are declared Enemies to Pleasure, hate their Enemies devoutly, are excessively ambitious; and cloak all these hopeful Qualities with exterior Piety. Can Mortals resemble one another more perfectly?

You must therefore, dear *Isaac*, acknowledge, that the *English* very unjustly reproach the *French* with the Troubles which *Molinism* and *Jansenism* create in their Country. It would be easy for the *French* to justify themselves by recriminating. I do admit, that the Madness of one People cannot justify the Madness of another, but, however, it may serve to excuse it. Every where if you find Divines, you find amongst them Ambition, Jealousy, Vanity, and of consequence Disputes and Persecution. The common People, but too readily adhere to different Opinions, just as they strike them. They have neither Sense enough to fathom them, nor Prudence enough to avoid them. We need not then be astonished that they follow blindly the Guides they

they have made choice of. At *London* the State acts with respect to the Church and the Presbyterians, just as at *Paris* between the *Mohists* and the *Jansenists*, and always without knowing why it inclines rather this way than that. If there were none but Philosophers and Divines in the World, the latter would certainly be obliged to abandon their Disputes, for want of finding Disciples to maintain them.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live happy and content, and may the God of our Fathers remove far from thee a pertinacious disputing Spirit.

London.



LETTER CXXXIX.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraite, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *English*, my Friend, are persuaded, that with respect to the Sciences they excel all other Nations. They imagine that Nature hath furnished them with Talents, which she hath denied to other People. When they are told that there is no convincing Reason appears in Justification of this their Assertion, and that there is something very odd in supposing that a Man born ten Leagues off their Shore, or indeed that any two Men born ten Leagues asunder, should not have as much Wit the one as the other; they presently run you over a List of their celebrated Authors, characterize each of them in

in a pompous manner, and then put the Question; Why, if the thing be not as they say, there are not as many great Men found in any other Nation? Such as dispute unfairly with the *English*, and such as cannot get over their natural Prejudices, endeavour to rid themselves of this Difficulty, by denying that the Authors of whom the *English* boast are at all superior to those of other Nations. But if we speak truly and sincerely, we must confess that this Objection is not easily shifted off. It must on the contrary be owned, that the *English* have amongst them Writings, which seem to have been dictated by Persons of more than human Capacity. Whoever has read *Locke* and *Newton* with such Application as is necessary, in order to taste the Excellency of their Writings, cannot but be convinced that there are among the *English* certain learned Persons who think more freely, and more solidly, than the Learned in other Nations.

I know, dear *Isaac*, that the Liberty which the People enjoy here, gives a certain Hardiness and Elevation of Mind which is not to be found in many other Countries. If we will have Men Philosophers, we must allow them Liberty of Thought, and the free Use of their Reason. It would be as wild and as ridiculous to look for such a Person as *Locke* in *Spain*, as to think of making an Orange grow as happily, and to the same degree of Perfection in a little Tub as in the open Air, and in a Soil fit for it. But if there are Nations hampered and oppressed, there are also some other Nations not a grain less free than the *English*, and who might therefore give the same Loosé to their Imaginations as they do. Whence then comes it, that even amongst them there are not Philosophers equal to the *English*?

You

You see, dear *Isaac*, that some Reasons there are which seem at least to favour the Opinion the Inhabitants of this Country have taken up, that there is more Wit, and a deeper Reach in Science amongst them than amongst their Neighbours; but after all, these Reasons are rather specious than solid: For if Things are searched to the Bottom, we shall find, that there are among other Nations Persons of as great and shining Parts, as amongst the *English*, though they have not written such perfect Pieces. What I advance on this Subject will appear a Paradox, however there is nothing more certain. In the Time that Philosophy was obscured by the dark Mists thrown thereupon by the Commentators of *Aristotle* and the Schoolmen, the *English* were in the same Condition with their Neighbours, as much blinded and cramped in their Discoveries as they. All the Force of their Imaginations did not set them at liberty; they were as much the Slaves of *Aristotle*, and as much in love with the essential Forms, which was the Jargon of his Disciples, as those whom they now excel; they submitted to the Yoke of the *Romish* Divines, and had Schoolmen amongst them as well as elsewhere. A *Frenchman*, in those Days of Darkness, had the Courage to refuse paying Homage to this Idol. He did more, he wrote against its Worship; and *Gassendi*, by his learned Dissertations against *Aristotle*, became the Forerunner of *Descartes*, the Restorer of true Philosophy, and the great Scourge of the Peripateticks. Mankind after having been so long plunged amidst Visions and Chimæras, began on a sudden to use their Reason, and to examine Opinions before they received them. In consequence of this a multitude of Discoveries equally surprizing and useful, succeeded to lying Tales and gross Puerilities. Nature's

ture's abhorring a Vacuum was found to be a mere Whim, the Air appeared to be a heavy Body, Telescopes were invented, Geometry was extended much farther than it had ever been; and by habituating themselves to Reason, Men went insensibly far greater Lengths than at the first themselves could have hoped.

While these happy Revolutions were made in the Republick of Science in *France*, what passed in *England*? Little; one might say, nothing. *Hobbes*, the Friend and Admirer of *Gassendi*, was almost the only great Philosopher in this Country. But what a Difference was there between *Gassendi* and *Hobbes*? His Works*, though they have in them good Things, may yet be appealed to in proof of the Superiority of the *French* Author. - We see in them no established System supported by persuasive Arguments; in many Places he is very hard, and in others not at all to be understood. Where he seems to make Matter the *first Cause* of all Things, he seems to be below *Spinoza*; where he asserts God to be the Creator of the World, he is by no means equal to *Descartes*, who, to say the Truth, opened the Eyes of the *English Literati*.

No sooner they saw their Errors, than they began to make extraordinary Uses of the Lights they had received, and perfected many Things which others had but begun; they did that for succeeding Generations; which the Disciples of *Descartes* had done for them; that is to say, they put Knowledge into a proper Train, and left it to be farther cultivated by their Posterity.

* *Elementorum Philosophiæ sectio prima de Corpore.* See also *Prælectiones sex ad professores Savilianos.* And another Book, intituled, *De Homine, sive Elementorum Philosophiæ Sectio secunda.*

I make

I make no Difficulty of affirming, that there wants as much Quickness of Thought, and as great Strength of Genius to distinguish the Road to Truth in the midst of Errors, as to pursue that Route happily when once it is discovered. I do admit, that *Newton* is much superior both to *Descartes* and *Gassendi*. But if the *English* Philosopher had lived at the same time they did, it is possible he might not have gone so far. Consider, my Friend, that the first Principles of *Newton's* Philosophy, are the same which *Gassendi* established on the Ruin of Peripateticism. The Necessity of a Void which had been so long exploded, and almost forgotten for twelve hundred Years, was first demonstrated by the *Gallick* Sage. It is on this Void so strangely recovered, that *Newton* founds those Reasons of his, whereby he shews the Positions laid down by *Descartes* to be impossible. And if by this Means he has vanquished the *Cartesians*, it must be allowed that he does it by virtue of the Force borrowed from *Gassendi*.

I am satisfied, my dear *Isaac*, that if we reflect attentively, we shall see no Cause to allow this Claim the *English* put in, to Superiority of Genius over all other Nations. It must be acknowledged that they are actually the greatest Philosophers in the World. But as I have shewn they owe this in some Measure to the *French*, so it is not impossible that this Nation in its Turn may hereafter produce some great Man who may not only equal, but even exceed the illustrious *Newton*. But with respect to such as to defeat this Claim deny the Excellence of the *English* Philosophers, we must necessarily ascribe this to Blindness, owing either to Prejudice or to Ignorance. In order to be assured of this, we need only compare the Sages of *England* with those whom their Adversaries oppose to them, and the Truth will clearly appear.

Descartes destroyed the Chimæras of the Schoolmen; he taught Mankind how to discover the Errors of the Ancients, and thereby pointed out the Means of discovering his own. He made a great Progress in Geometry; and we owe to him the Application of Algebra to Curves. He wanted but little of perfecting Dioptricks, which in his Hands became in a manner a new Science. He made use in this Branch of Science of that Geometrical Turn and Quickness of Invention with which Heaven had blessed him, and which he had heightened by a most assiduous Application. Behold the mighty Talents of this Man, but remember at the same time his Defects. He was deceived in his Notions of the Soul. His Proofs of the Being of a God are not always either just or evident. Innate Ideas, which he obstinately maintained, have not the least Appearance of Truth. He has advanced some Errors about the Laws of Motion and the Nature of Light. He has done still more, he has adapted those Puerilities, and that playing with Words, with which he reproached the Schoolmen. He treats his own Term *indefinite* exactly as they were wont to use their Terms, alledging that Space and Matter are not either finite, or infinite. In fine, he would persuade us that his Belief was that God could change the Essence of Things.

Newton did not only make use of the Lights, but of the Faults of *Descartes*; he went as far beyond the Point where he left Geometry as *Descartes* had done beyond that Point where he found it. In this respect I must own, that the Merit is equal in each of our Philosophers. But at the same time it must be acknowledged, that *Newton* is a much greater Geometrician than *Descartes*, and in all the other Parts of Philosophy he has the same Advantage. One may say that *Newton* has discovered a new World,
and

and found the Means of explaining the most abstruse Things. He has shewn the Errors of *Descartes* as to the Nature of Light, and which is much more, he has substituted in their stead, Principles that are true, and which are demonstrated to be so by many Experiments. He has destroyed all his *Vortices*; he has shewn the Impossibility of their Existence, he has substituted in their Place *Attraction*, the Effects of which he has demonstrated, and calculated its Proportions. It is to this Philosopher the Universe stands indebted for that prodigious Knowledge which he brought to Light. It was *Newton* who taught all the Learned, to their no small Amazement, that a *Tendency* to the *Center* was the sole Cause that Bodies weigh in Proportion to their Matter; and that to the same Cause was owing the Motion of *Planets* and *Comets*. If it were possible to believe that any Man might remain unequalled, one would be tempted to suppose it was this Philosopher, who has so clearly manifested the Laws of Nature. At least, it must be acknowledged, that if any one hereafter should arise capable of rivalling this great Man, such Philosophers as we have at present in the World are infinitely his Inferiors.

Some very learned Men, and above all the *Cartesians*, affect to compare *Mallebranche* with *Locke*. I find, dear *Isaac*, the same Difference between these Philosophers, or at least as great a one as between *Newton* and *Descartes*. *Mallebranche*, in his sublime and extravagant Illusions, appears rather a Poet than a Philosopher. He aimed too high, and instead of reaching Heaven as he intended, he has got but half way. So that he can neither discover what he endeavours to find out, nor, by his Height, can he penetrate the Secrets of Men. He admits innate Ideas, and also others by which we see all

Things in God. He could not persuade himself that the Existence of Bodies could be demonstrated. In a word, his Philosophy is no more than an ingenious Romance, which is sometimes very unintelligible.

Locke, always wise, and always studious of Truth, lays down Principles perfectly right, draws Consequences from them which are strictly just, is exact in all his Proofs, and has displayed all the hidden Secrets of the human Understanding. He has taught the Learned not to decide on any thing which is not thoroughly known. Before his time Philosophers had given us their own Visions on the Nature of the Soul for Truths, he has destroyed these Chimæras, ruined the Doctrine of innate Ideas, and demonstrated to us that all our Ideas are derived to us from our Senses. Having anatomized as it were the Causes of the human Reason, and exposed to Mortals all the Knowledge it is possible to hope of the Essence of the Soul, he has made them observe with equal Candor and Sagacity, that they never could have comprehended the Nature of the human Mind, if God had not been pleased to grant to a material Being the Faculty of thinking.

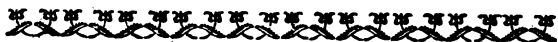
Consider, dear *Isaac*, how much more certain, more natural, and, if I may be allowed the Expression, less rarified his Sentiments are than those of *Mallebranche*. Compare the Candor and Sincerity of the *English* Metaphysician with the Presumption and Pride of this *Frenchman*. He not only bounded the Power of the Divinity with respect to the Souls of Men, but adopted a System as ridiculous as it is unsustainable with respect to those of Beasts, whom he would have to be mere Machines, like to Clocks, *eating without Pleasure, roaring without Pain, neither desiring nor fearing any thing*. Certainly, my Friend, *Mallebranche* must have had a great deal of
Vanity;

Vanity; if he fancied that it was in his Power to induce Men to take up with such Dreams as these. I know very well that he did but follow *Descartes* who invented them, but he is nothing the less blameable for that, he ought not to have embraced, but to have rejected them. But how came he to take into his Head that Matter was susceptible of Thought; he, I say, who admitted the Existence of Bodies out of mere Complaisance, and who found fault with his Master for not absolutely denying it? In order to be fully convinced, said he, that there are Bodies, it ought not only to be demonstrated that there is a God, and that God will not deceive us, but also that God has assured us, that he has effectually created them, which I do not find proved in any of the Works of M. *Descartes*. God informs the Understanding, and obliges us to afford our Assent two Ways: By Evidence, and by Faith. I admit that Faith obliges us to own that there are Bodies, but as for any Evidence I see it not. Nor do I think there is any sufficient to enforce our Belief*. Do you believe, my Friend, that *Locke* would have ever attempted to prove, that there is nothing exists but God, and our Minds? No, no, he was too wise to amuse himself with such blind Illusions.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live happy and content, and never become the Votary of any Philosophy, which is not warranted by Reason.

London.

* *Recherche de la Verité, Eclaircissement sur la 1. Livre, P. 499.*



L E T T E R CXL.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
 Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

I N my last Letter, dear *Isaac*, I gave you some Account of the *English* Philosophers. In this I propose to continue that Account, and to give you some Ideas of the other learned Men of that Country. You are acquainted with the Works of the famous Chancellor *Bacon*. He was in some sort the Precursor of *Descartes* and *Gassendi*. One may safely say, that he foretold that the Ruin of Scholastic Impertinencies was at hand. He saw the Imperfection of that Philosophy, and was the first who pointed out the Means of redressing it*.

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* He very fully proved, that the Philosophy of *Aristotle* did not deserve to be preferred before the Systems of other ancient Authors; that it had been long hated and despised by the *Greeks* and other Heathen Nations, and never found Admirers but in times of profound Ignorance, when the Sciences were utterly neglected. *Quod vero putant Homines in Philosophia Aristotelis magnum utique consensum esse; cum post illam editam Antiquorum Philosophiæ cessaverint et exoleverint; ast apud tempora, quæ sequuta sunt, nil melius inventum fuerit; adeo ut illa tam bene posita et fundata videatur, ut utrumque tempus ad se traxerit: Primo, quod de cessatione Antiquarum Philosophiarum post Aristotelis opera edita Homines*

A Protestant of my Acquaintance was saying to me the other Day, that *Savonarola* prepared the Way for *Luther*, *Galwin*, and the other Reformers, and that *Bacon* had done the same for the Philosophers of our Times. Fortune, said he, seems to take a Pleasure in persecuting these Precursors as you call them; *Savonarola* was hanged, and *Bacon* fined, and lost his Office by Judgment of the House of Peers. The *English* value the Moral Essays of this Author at a high Rate. They have reason for so doing; these Essays are indeed very good, but they are by no means equal in point of Beauty or of Delicacy, to the Essays of *Michael de Montaigne*. As much as the Physical and Metaphysical Philosophers of the *English* transcend the *French Literati* in the same kind; so great is the Difference between the *French* Scepticks and the *English* Writers in that Way. No Author of this Country ever came up to *Montaigne*, much less to *Bayle*. I very much doubt whether they ever had a Writer possessed of such a prodigious Fund of Erudition as that Philosopher enjoyed, and who had the inimitable Faculty of treating the most abstruse Questions in so entertaining a manner, as to make them agreeable to Men, the World, and even to Ladies themselves.

You know, dear *Isaac*, that the *English* have no Historian comparable to *Titus Livius*, to *Tacitus*,

Homines cogitant id falsum est; diu enim postea, usque ad tempora Ciceronis et secula sequentia, manserunt opera veterum philosophorum. Sed temporibus insequentibus, ex inundatione Barbarorum in imperium Romanum, postquam Doctrina Humana velut naufragium perpeffa esset; tum demum philosophiæ Aristotelis et Platonis tanquam tabulæ ex materia leviora, et minus solida per fluctus temporum servatæ sunt. Bacon, Novum Organum Scientiarum, lib. I. cap. LXXVII. p. 298.

to *Salust*, to *Father Paul*, to *de Thou*, or even to *Father Daniel*. Is it not a surprizing thing that Party-Spirit should more strongly influence this whole Nation than it does the Jesuits themselves. Of late Years *Burnet* took it into his Head to imitate *de Thou*, but we see plainly that he had it in his Head only; for in point of Exactness, Method, and Purity of Stile, he comes not near him; not to speak of his Partiality, with which all Parties reproach him. They tell us, that in his first Volume there are not above five or six Characters, and his own is placed at the Head of them all. This Criticism however may be unjust, because it is possible the Defect may not proceed from any Malignity in the Historian, but from the Want of proper Subjects for Panegyrick. In a word, it would be a difficult thing to pick out of the *English* History any two Reigns so corrupt and tyrannical, as those which he has painted out. However that be, this we know for certain, that a Whig never keeps within Bounds when he writes of a Tory Administration, and that the Tories again are not a grain more modest, or more reasonable in their Representations of the Whigs.

The Authority of *English Historians* is on a Level with those who wrote in *France* under the Reigns of *Charles the Ninth*, and *Henry the Third*. And it would be a difficult thing ever to find in this Country Persons capable of writing what Posterity may give an entire Credit to. There seems to be two Causes for this. The first is the Hatred of opposite Parties; one Part of the Nation is at all times the sworn Enemy of the other. The second is that Presumption and good Opinion which all the *English* Writers have of themselves. They cannot find in their Hearts to allow other Nations any Advantages which appear to them destructive of their own

own Glory. If they disguise without Scruple, and even falsify such Facts as happen under their own Eyes to serve their Party-Purposes, how much more ready must they be to misrepresent what happens abroad, when it does not suit them to tell the Truth?

If the *English* have no good Historians, it is made up to them by their excellent Poets. You are acquainted, dear *Isaac*, with the *Paradise Lost* of *Milton*. This Poem has not all the Beauties of the *Æneid*; but I confess I like it much better than the *Gierusalemme Liberata* of *Tasso*; to me it seems that the *English* Poet has made a much better use of Religion than the *Italian*. I do not think that we can find either in *Virgil* or in *Homer* any thing more sublime than the Portrait *Milton* has given us of the *Deity*, making War on the rebellious *Angels*. He says, the *Almighty* took his Arms from *Terror*.

There is something very majestick in this Idea, and if one dares to bring the Divinity like a Hero into the Field of Battle, one cannot certainly give him a better Squire than *Terror*, whom this Bard assigns him.

Waller is a Poet very far below *Catullus*, and yet very much superior to *Voiture*. His Writings are gallant and full of Beauties, but faint and languishing, at least sometimes; his Verse having neither the Brightness, nor the Beauty of *La Fontaine*, at the same time that it wants the unnatural Flights of *Guarini*. In short, he has not quite the Merit of the *French* Author, nor quite so many Faults as the *Italian*.

Pope is without Contradiction one of the greatest Poets in the Universe. One may, indeed, one ought to look upon him as a formidable Rival to *Boileau*, *Corneille*, *Racine*, *Virgil*, and *Homer*. This last Author is perhaps more perfect in his *English*

Translation, than in the Original. I cannot think that there is any thing in Poetry more ingenious, more arch, and more gallant than his Poem of the *Rape of the Lock*. The *Lutrin* of *Boileau* is a stronger and more manly Piece, but it is very far from being so pleasant. They assure me in this Country, that *Pope* was not above twenty Years of Age when he composed that charming Poem. The noble Description given us by *Virgil* of the Employments of deceased Heroes in the *Elysian* Shades, does not surpass *Pope's* pleasant Picture of the Amusement of the Ladies after their Decease.

Think not, when Woman's transient Breath is fled,
That all her Vanities at once are dead :
Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the Cards.
Her joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And love of *Ombre*, after Death survive.
For when the Fair in all their Pride expire,
To their first Elements the Souls retire :
The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame,
Mount up, and take a *Salamander's* Name.
Soft yielding Minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental Tea.
The graver Prude sinks downward to a *Gnome*,
In search of Mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.

It must be acknowledged, dear *Isaac*, that it is simply impossible to conceive the Reveries of the Cabalists better applied, than they are by him, in order to form a just and delicate Critique on the Fair Sex.

All the different Characters of Women are exactly described in this Account of their Amusements
after

after Death, and by a Stroke familiar to great Masters, the Poet, though he supposes them dead, paints them so to the Life, that nothing can be either more entertaining or more instructive.

The Earl of *Rochester* hath written several Satires in a Style as nervous and as beautiful as that of *Boileau*. He had indeed a strong and piercing Wit, a brisk and lively Imagination. He lived like *Petroneus*, and died like *La Fontaine*. He piqued himself through the Course of his Life on maintaining the Character of a Free-Thinker. Some time before he went out of the World, however, he thought fit to change his Sentiments entirely. The fear of Death, and of the Consequences that might attend it, astonished him. In his last Moments he had recourse to a Divine. But in order to save his Reputation as a Philosopher, he chose to capitulate rather than surrender at Discretion. However, after some Conferences with the Doctor, he yielded, signed whatever was thought fit, and sacrificed even his dear Philosophy, after all the pains he had taken to preserve it. He acknowledged all his Errors, and a little after his Decease Dr. *Burnet* published an Account of this extraordinary Conversion.

This, dear Friend, is the ordinary Custom of Atheists. While they enjoy perfect Health, they will not forsooth believe that there is a God, or at least they do their utmost not to believe it, because they imagine that ridding themselves of this Belief, they may plunge with greater Security into Vice. But when they are ready to leave the World, their false Philosophy vanishes, and they throw themselves into the Arms of those who offer their Assistance to dispel the Horrors of their Hearts. They become then as submissive, as before they were incredulous. There is scarce any thing of which they may not be persuaded.

suaded in these their last Hours. They take on trust whatever is said unto them, resume all the Prejudices of which they fancied themselves cured for ever; witness those weak Creatures who have ordered themselves to be cloathed in the Habits of Monks, and directed that they should be so interred.

It is not Reason, it is Fear and Terror that makes a Man make such a Change as this on the Verge of Life. To be convinced of this, one need only reflect on the constant Custom of these Persons, which is to die in the Religion in which they were born. If their Conversions were Fruits of Conviction, they would in this case act as others do in their full Health, who often see cause to alter their religious Opinions, and to live in another Faith than that which they received in their Childhood: With how much Justice then, dear *Isaac*, may we despise a Man who all his Life long refuses to acknowledge the most evident Truths, and on a sick Bed condescends to resume the most ridiculous Prejudices?

Besides the Poets of whom I have been speaking, there have been many others who deserve the Esteem of Men of Parts. The *English* are by no means deficient in Dramatick Poets. I shall very speedily give you my Thoughts on their Theatre.

It is not at all surprizing that Boetry hath been carried such a Length in this Nation. Men of the first Quality have not disdained to become Followers of the Muses. My Lord *Roscommon*, the Duke of *Buckinghamshire*, the Earl of *Derfet*, and many other Persons of an elevated Rank, have written Pieces which give them, with Justice, the Title of great Poets. These Examples have excited the Envy and Ambition of private Men, every body naturally imitates the Grandees of his Country,
and

and it is the Happiness of the *English* to have always amongst them Men of Quality of distinguished Merit, passionately fond of Glory and the *Belles Lettres*. To be in the Mode here, there is no Necessity of learning ridiculous Grimaces, and an affected Laugh, or a contemptuous Disregard for the Sciences, since whoever would pretend to treat as Pedants all such as devote themselves to Learning and to Books, would be thought dull stupid Creatures, and become as ridiculous as they would endeavour to make others

Before I finish this Letter, I must take notice of one of those amiable Wonders, one of those pleasing Prodigies, with which once in twenty Ages, Providence is pleased to amaze Mankind. This Phænomena so favourable to *England* and the Sciences, is the present *Queen Consort*. This Princess is not only free from all the Foibles of her Sex, but is also unblemished by any of those slight Failings which we discern in the greatest Men. She is a *Heroine*, but a Philosophick *Heroine*. Her Grandeur hinders not her having all the Kindness, Tenderness, and Affability that can be wished, neither do the necessary Cares of a Crown prevent her cultivating and protecting the Sciences. Her Liberalities are constantly afforded to the Unhappy, but of the unfortunate Learned she is particularly tender.

It must appear surprising to you, *Isaac*, that so many Talents, and so great Virtues, should centre in one Person; be assured however, that all the Praises I bestow, are much inferior to what that Princess deserves. You know that the Lustre of a Throne is not apt to dazzle me. My Philosophick Eyes can through that Splendor discern the Truth, which when I cannot divulge with Honour, I keep
a pro-

a profound Silence. I leave to the Writers of Dedications the Trade of praising the Great to an extravagant degree, in order to acquire some very moderate Pension. I am willing to grant the same Indulgence to a Poet; the Muses have for a long time prostituted their Praises, they may now do it by Prescription. How many Tyrants, how many Drivellers, how many illustrious Good-for-nothings have they commended? But never can I admit, that a Philosopher should debase himself so far as to betray the Truth, and offer Incense to an Idol, the Worthlessness of which he knows.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy, and write me an Answer some time or other.

London.



LETTER CXLI.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONTS,
Caraites, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *English* have certain Customs, dear *Isaac*, which appear to me as idle as any that I have observed amongst other Nations. I was invited the other Day to assist at the Funeral of a Citizen, and I confess to you that I found it almost impossible to penetrate into the Reason of their Ceremonies, which seemed to me as extraordinary as those I had observed at *Paris* on the like Occasion.

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As soon as a Man expires in this Country, they strip him with all imaginable Care of every thing made of Linen. A *Mohammedan* is not more careful in washing a dead Body, a *Jew* in closing its Issues, or a *Papist* in muttering his superstitious Prayers over it, than the *English* are in putting on a Woollen Shroud. There are a great Number of these sort of Vestures always to be had ready made, great numbers of People gaining their Livelihood thereby. It is forbidden to use about a dead Body any Material which is not of Woollen; and if even Cotton, or flaxen Thread be employed, it is considered as a Crime against the State. I was exceedingly surprized, when I first heard of this Custom, but when I came to understand the Reason of it, I was very far from condemning the *English*. The Intention of the Law, which forbids burying in Linen, is to encourage the Consumption of Woollen Goods. I must confess, that it is scarce possible to carry a Concern for Trade farther, than to make the very Dead interest themselves in it. This, without doubt, is a home Push; and if the rest of their Funeral Customs were as well founded, I should not pretend to criticise them, but should as readily approve them as soon as I understood their Causes. But there are many, of which they do not only find themselves at a loss to assign the Reason, but also freely admit that they scarce know any End that they have.

When a dead Man has been attended by his Woollen *Valet de Chambre*, and is equipt with a fine or a coarse Suit according to his Degree; for the Christians, you know carry their Vanity even to their Graves; they leave him for two or three Days in the middle of his Apartment, to give him time to come to Life again if he shall so please.
I cannot

I cannot attribute to any other Cause this Custom of keeping a dead Body two or three Weeks, sometimes till it be putrefied. If this be the true Reason of the Custom, then I am persuaded that the Heads of Families first brought it up, and that their Children had no Share therein. For many of them would to my Knowledge look not a little out of humour, if from time to time some of these dead Folks should take it into their Heads to live again, and in consequence thereof quit their Shrouds.

It appears to me, dear *Isaac*, that notwithstanding these Precautions, for fear any such should be buried alive, People are notwithstanding easier on the Article of the Loss of their Relations than in any other. When the Deceased has shewn an obstinate Resolution to remain where he is, they nail him up in his Coffin, and when this is carried to the Grave, it is covered with a large black Pall bordered with white. This Covering is so wide, that six Men can stand underneath it, without either discovering themselves, or any part of the Coffin's being exposed to view; these Christians of the Reformed Religion pretend hereby to do Honour to the Dead. I should have easily guessed this, if I had not been told it, having observed that all the *European Nations*, except the *Turks*, take a great Pride in seeing certain Pieces of Stuff or Silk borne up by Persons appointed for that Purpose. This we see in respect to the Robes of Kings and other Sovereign Princes. Counsellors of Parliament at *Paris* have likewise Train-bearers, and so have Priests in their Processions. But Women are solicitous above all in this respect, and as if their Honour lay chiefly in their Tails, when they are of a certain Rank, expect to have them borne up after them. Surely, *Isaac*, there is something very pleasant

fant in this. But to return to the *English* Funerals.

The Coffin, thus covered with its sable Veil, is preceded by a certain Number of dismal-looking Fellows, who look like so many Serjeants, each with a black Staff in his Hand tipped with Silver; next march the Parsons, with a slow and solemn Motion; the Relations of the Deceased close the Proceſſion, and now and then appear extremely sorrowful. At length the Body comes to the Church, there it is set down for a while. In the mean time there is a Sermon preached, in which the Praises of the dead Person are not forgotten. They likewise take this Opportunity of receiving certain Fees, on account of the Permission of the Corpse's entering the Church with the black Pall or Covering before mentioned. Each Parish has three, of different Prices. The *English* Churchmen, though they no longer talk of the Fire of Purgatory, keep up however a good many Money-getting Ceremonies in Funerals, and have only changed the *Romish* Prayers for the Dead into very harmless Compliments on their Memory. In this respect, I cannot but commend their Decency and Candor. They do not think it proper to take Church-Dues, without returning some way or other Church-Favours.

When the Corpse is interred, the People return in the same Order to the House; there they give them Wine, white and red, and sometimes burnt with Spices; every one takes a little to comfort him for the Loss of his Friend, and the Women drink a Glass or two in order to keep up their Spirits.

I find these Customs altogether as ridiculous as those of the Papists, though I confess they are a little more cheerful. Instead of doleful lamentable Psalms, they content themselves with a short Sermon; and
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in the room of the Popish Holy Water, these Churchmen have wisely brought in a Glass of Wine for themselves. One may well enough compare the Popish Burials to the Ceremonies of Magicians employed in calling up departed Shades; whereas those of the Church of *England* differ nothing from the Feasts of People in good humour. Compliments and good Cheer are here united; and in comparing Folly with Folly, I must own that which entertains is much more excusable than that which afflicts me.

People of Distinction in this Country are buried in the same manner as at *Paris*; they are carried in a Hearse attended by several Coaches full of Mourners and Friends. In this manner they are conducted to the Churches, and placed in the Vaults belonging to their respective Families.

I must own, my Friend, that I am exceedingly astonished, on considering the Ceremonies used by the Churchmen in this Country, at their exclaiming so loudly at the Papists. They are less exempt than they fancy from those Reproaches which they bestow so liberally upon others. In my opinion, the Presbyterians are less in danger of being retorted upon in this respect; their Ceremonies are fewer and more simple, which renders them less shocking in the Eyes of a Philosopher. Give me leave for a Moment to suppose myself a Papist. *I will undertake, says I to a Churchman, to prove that you have Customs of as extraordinary a Nature as ours, and that the Thing with which you most reproach us, and which in fact never did happen amongst us, hath fallen out frequently amongst you. How often have your Doctors, and your Historians, nay, and even your Poets, made themselves merry at our Expence on Pope Joan? "How happy, say you, was the*
" Church

*“ Church when under this Female Præfident? A
 “ pleasant Successor this of St. Peter! Would not the
 “ Apostle, think you, look down from Heaven with
 “ Amazement at the Sight of a Woman in his Chair?
 “ What could the People say when she was brought
 “ to-bed of a little Popeling in a publick Place?”*
*These Pleasantries, however, belong more properly to
 the English Church than to the Roman, as I will
 undertake to prove. For take which Side you will:
 Suppose that, with the Learned of these Times, you
 give up the Story as a Forgery, and acknowledge that
 there never was such a Thing as a Female Pope;
 you must then grant, that the Clamours made on this
 Subject are very ill founded; and you must likewise
 allow, that this is a shrewd Sign of your Readiness
 to charge us with Things of which we never were
 guilty. On the other hand, if you persist in believing
 that this Tale of a Female Pope is really no Fiction,
 I will then undertake to prove to you on your own
 Principles, that this could not possibly bring any Dis-
 honour on the Church, since what, according to your
 own Account, hath but once happened amongst us,
 has been however frequent enough amongst you. The
 Sovereign is constantly allowed to be Head of the
 Church in England: What think you then during
 the Reigns of Elizabeth and Anne? Had you not
 then Female Popes? You cannot deny the Matter of
 Fact, which exposes you to these Pleasantries? Did
 not the Marshal de Biron boast that he had seen the
 Head of the Church in England dance. I know
 very well, that your Authors stoutly dispute this Point,
 maintaining positively that this Princess did no more
 than play on the Harpsichord. Be that as it will,
 you must admit that she might have danced, if she
 had so pleased; nay, she might have gone farther,
 and imitated Pope Joan in all Things. Let me ask
 you then; Would you have thought the worse of your
 Reli-*

Religion for such an Accident? Without doubt you would answer, that the Failings of a particular Person cannot prejudice any Church. I also, on my part, alledge the same Thing, and I defy you to find a Reply; move which way you will, I shall always have it in my Power to recriminate. But, say you, when our Queens happen to be at the Head of our Religion, it is a mere Accident; they enjoy an empty Title, and perform none of the Functions. Now this is what I absolutely deny, for they have a direct Authority over the Clergy, and in quality of Heads of the Church, perform all that any other Heads of the Church do at any other Time. Before you can rid yourself of this Objection, you must shew how Kings are Heads of the Church, and wherein the Difference lies between their Exercise of that Office, and the Manner in which it is discharged when you have a Queen Regent.

When the Provinces of Zealand and Holland offered by their Ambassadors to acknowledge Queen Elizabeth for their Sovereign, she rejected that Offer, and told them withal, that they were in the wrong to revolt about so small a Matter as the Mass. If you won't assist thereat, said she, as a Ceremony of the Church, go to it as to a Play. Suppose I took it into my Head to act such a Scene before you, would you run away? I know you would not, but stand still and look on. You see I am in a manner ready, for I am dressed in a white Robe, and that is one of the main Things in the Business.

Do you believe that a Queen who was so well versed in a Ceremonial of another Church, as to have been able to have gone through it in case of need, should be at all at a loss about the Rites of her own Church, of which she was the Head, or at all diffident of her Right of performing them, if she had so thought fit?

fit? For my part, I believe that if Elizabeth had taken it into her Head to preach, none of her Subjects would have had any Pretence to censure her Sermons. This, Sir, is my way of talking to English Churchmen.

Consider, dear Isaac, that different Sects attack each other in the weakest Parts, without considering whether they are not guilty themselves of the same Faults which they impute to their Adversaries. The Presbyterians indeed may be allowed to throw Pope *Joan* in the Dish of the Papists, because they stand in no fear of a Recrimination. The Church in this Country seems to be the *Mean* between that of *Rome*, and the *Conventicle* of *Geneva*. The Members of that Communion have not so many Ceremonies as the former, neither have they the Simplicity of the latter; they seem to be afraid of doing too much on one Side, or of doing too little on the other.

Farewell, dear Isaac, live content and happy.

London.



LETTER CXLII.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

A Very melancholy Affair, my dear Isaac, of which I was unluckily a Spectator a few Days ago, compels me to make some serious Reflections on the Force of Prejudice, since I am convinced
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how far wrong Notions and a false Love of Glory can carry Men.

One of my Friends proposed to me going to see a very pleasant Sight: I asked him very seriously whether there was any thing in it curious. *There cannot*, answered he, *be any thing more entertaining, and besides, there are excellent Rape-dancers.* The Gravity with which my Friend spoke, sufficiently persuaded me that I should have no Reason to be displeased with the Sight, and therefore I readily came into his Proposal. I followed my Conductor, and at a small distance from London, we fell upon a great Road where there was an infinite number of Spectators assembled in a Groupe. But judge, dear *Isaac*, at my Surprize, when looking about me I saw a Gibbet, and twenty Highwaymen and other Malefactors on the point of being executed. I cannot say that I saw both at the same time, for the latter were not yet come, but the People spoke of their coming with a high Air of Satisfaction. *How!* said I to my Friend, *What is this! The charming Spectacle of which you spoke to me!* *Be quiet*, said he, *you will have all the Reason in the World to be satisfied, the Play will presently begin, they only wait for the Actors who are upon the Road.*

While my Friend was a speaking I heard a prodigious Noise; I turned my Head and saw a Cart, and in it several People, some of whom were well dressed. *Ah! Ah!* cried my Friend, *I see by the Looks of the Gentlemen that you will be well enough pleased with this Scene.* *Why*, returned I, *what are these People? and what do they come here for?* *Come here for*, returned he, laughing, *why these People are to perform the principal Parts.* I then began to consider with Attention the People in the Cart, who as they passed near me appeared, notwith-

notwithstanding they were so well dressed, to have each a Cord about his Neck, with which a Moment after he was to be tyed up. I was going to ask my Friend some Questions about the Dress of these People, which I thought pretty extraordinary, and at the same time ill chosen; but I was prevented by the Harangue of one of the Highwaymen: He coughed, he spit, looked about him, as unconcernedly as if he had been a Spectator; next he pulled off a Pair of white Gloves and put them up in his Pocket, and then addressing himself to the Croud, he told them, that God permitted him to come to that End for playing at Cards on Sundays; had it not been for this Crime, he fancied it seems that he should never have been discovered, but have gone on quietly and methodically in the way of his Profession.

While the Gentleman was making his Speech, another of his Companions practised a thousand whimsical Grimaces, and said from time to time twenty droll Things in order to make the Spectators smile. If I had not been informed how this Comedy was to end, I should certainly have fancied I had been present at a Mountebank's Stage. Our Highwayman Orator spoke pretty much with the Air of one of these itinerant Doctors when he is distributing his Packets; and the other Fellow, who contented himself with lesser Motions and a sort of dumb Shew, resembled pretty strongly a *Pierot* or *Jack Pudding*. As I was looking very attentively upon these unhappy Creatures, in order to discover whether this false Bravery with which they mimic Heroism in their last Moments would really hold out, the Hangman, who had already fastened the Ropes to the Gallows, gave the Horses a stroke with his Whip, and the Cart sliding away, the Actors

Actors remained pendant in the Air, where they made a very odd figure. Immediately upon this a great Number of People ran to put them out of their Pain. Some pulled them by the Legs, others struck them with their Fists upon the Stomach, and by the Ease and Coolness with which they did this, I perceived that the *English* were far enough from that Delicacy which inspires other People on such Occasions, and fills them with a Horror for such as by their Crimes have brought themselves to a violent Death.

As soon as I had lost Sight of this dismal Spectacle, I could not help thinking of that Insensibility with which those whom I just now censured suffered, and concerning which I took occasion to question my Friend: *Pray*, said I, *what could be the cause that these two Highwaymen put on an Air of Intrepidity, unaffected by any of their Companions in Death? The Reason*, returned my Friend, *was, because they had an Inclination to die as they had lived, and to leave behind them the Character of Men of Spirit. In other Countries when a Criminal is condemned, his Head is presently taken up with the Importance of his Voyage, and his Conscience, forsooth, claims all his Attention. Here it is quite another Thing, a Man of Courage who hopes to wipe off a part of the Shame by his Manner of sustaining his Punishment, has other sort of Thoughts in his Head. He takes care to get himself shaved, powdered, and well dressed, and then this Dress again is, in part, to have the Air of a Wedding, and part that of a Funeral. He likewise equips himself with such a Speech as you heard the Man make just now, of which he gives a Copy to a Person who consoles him in his last Moments, by giving him solemn Assurances of seeing it printed and published.*

How! cried I, struck with Astonishment at what my Friend had told me, is it possible that all the sad Stuff I heard that Fellow say should be printed and laid before the World? I shall be no longer astonished that Malefactors die here like Beasts, without shewing any Marks of Concern for the flagrant Villanies they have committed, or like Fools trifle away their last Moments in playing antick Tricks to divert a Mob. Is it permitted amongst a People who pique themselves so much on their Reflection and Good Sense, that publick Executions should be thus in a manner burlesqued, the necessary Consequence of which must be the encouraging all those Crimes that are most dangerous for the Publick? The Fear of Shame is as strong in a human Soul, as the Fear of Punishment. How many People would risque their Lives to rescue themselves from Want, if the Fear of exposing their Families to everlasting Infamy did not withhold them! Yet in this Country, it is not only thought an Act of Injustice to reflect on the Family of a Criminal, but it is likewise thought reasonable to abate as much as is possible the Shame of his Execution. Whatever he has done in his Life, a Malefactor may acquire the Esteem of this Nation at his Death, provided he behaves then like a Beast or a Madman. Considering this, I am really amazed there are not in England many more Thieves of all Stamps than there are. Sure I am, that all imaginable Pains is taken to encrease their Number. It is true they are punished, but provided they die intrepid, this Punishment carries along with it very little Shame. If a Fellow dies boldly and with Spirit, his Memory, instead of being abhorred, is cherished, and the Press is employed to transmit an Account of his Bravery to Posterity.

If instead of applauding a Malefactor's stupid Harangue, who is impudent enough to make a Jest of his Suffering, his Behaviour was treated with a

proper Contempt, and his ill-placed Intrepidity received the Resentment it deserved, by an Appearance of double Indignation in the Spectators, Men capable of bad Practices would be abashed at the Consideration of their Consequences; and the Fear of the Infamy attending them would affright them more, than the Fear of that violent Death to which they are exposed, the Horror of which is greatly abated by the Applause they expect from the Resolution with which they die. It is really with me a Question who is least in his Wits, the Man who applauds a hardened Criminal, or the Criminal who fancies he can efface his Guilt by shewing no sort of Concern about it.

All these Arguments, dear Isaac, made no Impression upon my Friend; so far from it, that he pretended to defend this crying Abuse founded only on ridiculous Prejudices, and flattered himself that he had fully excused it, by attributing it to the natural Intrepidity of the *English*, and the Contempt they have for Death. It is, said I, for that very Reason, that the People of this Country should have other Motives to restrain them; when taking away their Lives will not terrify Folks, must you not have Recourse to other Methods to deter them from doing Mischief? It might be allowable amongst Nations where the Fear of Death terrifies beyond Description, to abate something of Shame in their Executions, because in other respects they have Force enough to produce the Effects which are looked for from them; but amongst you *English*, how is it possible to keep you to your Duty? This was received just as my former Discourse had been. My Friend contented himself with laughing in my Face, and I must own that as to this Head, the *English* are a very odd sort of People.

I dare say, dear Isaac, you will be no less shocked than I, at this ridiculous Practice of extenuating
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in such a manner the Infamy which such Wretches deserve who perish by the Halter, and that you will readily admit that the Prejudices of some polite Nations are frequently as ridiculous as those of untaught Savages. Every Man who will make use of his Reason, will easily discern that it is a Thing more excusable to push to Extremity the Severity with which such Men are treated, as bring themselves to suffer ignominious Deaths, than by pitying them to hurt Society. All imaginable Pains should be taken to find out Means of striking such People with Terror, and this more especially as they pretend to despise Death. The *Duke de Vendosme*, during the last War in *Italy*, caused a great Number of Banditti and Assassins to be hanged up, but without being able to put an End to such Disorders; which, on the contrary, continued as frequent as ever, the most horrid Murders being committed every Week, either on account of Jealousy, or private Piques. At length, however, the Duke fell upon a Remedy unthought of before; he took hold of the *Italian* Superstition, and gave Orders, that no Assassin should for the future be allowed a Confessor, in order to settle his Conscience before Death. This had the desired Effect, for it terrified those Miscreants infinitely more than the Fear of Death. The Risque of being hanged was nothing; but to be hanged without Confession was a Chance they could not be brought to stand.

When I was at *Paris*, the *Chevalier de Maisin* told me a Story of a Soldier who was condemned to be shot, and who absolutely refused to have any thing to do with the Priests. All imaginable Pains were taken to convince him of the Folly and Wick- edness, of such a Behaviour, but in vain, he remained firm to the very Hour of his Execution,

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notwithstanding all the Representations of his becoming the Prey of Devils, and of his suffering the most intolerable Torments to all Eternity when he came to die. In this fullen Disposition he was led out; but as he went along, he took it into his head to ask what *they would do with his Body?* To which it was answered, that it would be thrown into the Common Sewer. *How!* said he, *shan't I be buried in holy Ground?* *No,* replied the Priest, *since you are determined not to die like a Christian, we see no Reason why you should fare like a Christian after Death.* The Thoughts of not being interred in a Church-yard, did more with this Fellow than the Fear of Damnation. He thought nothing of his Soul's lying eternally in Hell; but he could not bear that his Body should be thrown into a Common Sewer.

Behold, my dear *Isaac*, an evident Proof of the Effects which Shame and a Sense of Infamy will produce, even in the Minds of the most hardened Men. There will always remain, even among such Creatures as these, such a Portion of Self-Love, as will make them extremely sensible of any Expressions of Horror towards them. For this Reason I am persuaded that it is so far from being unjust, that it is in truth a Thing useful to Society, to keep up a sort of Shyness towards such Families as have had any of their Branches cut off by the Hands of the common Hangman. Throwing an indelible Blemish upon those who are most dear to a Man, is a Curb that will restrain some Dispositions untractable by other Means; and Experience will shew, that such as are no way sensible of the Fear of Death, retain yet a Dread of covering with perpetual Infamy a Father, a Mother, Wife and Child.

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I know very well, that this Maxim will appear contrary to Equity, inasmuch as it renders innocent People obnoxious to those Punishments which only the Guilty have deserved. But then we must remember, that it is simply impossible even the wisest Laws should prove beneficial to all the World. All that can be expected is, that they should turn to the Benefit of the greatest part of them. This is the Sentiment of a very great Philosopher, who in order to prove the Justice of the *Roman Laws* against insolvent Debtors, maintains, that it is better a small number of People should run the Hazard of losing the Benefit of a just Excuse, than that the whole World should be left at liberty to look out specious Pretexes for not paying their just Debts*.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, live content, and mayest thou be happy in all thy Affairs.

London.



LETTER CXLIII

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraita*, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.

THE Letters you have written me, dear *Monceca*, and wherein you speak so freely of the Men of Letters in *England*, have induced me to

* *Satius enim erat à paucis etiam justum accusationem non accipi, quam ab omnibus aliquam tentari.* Seneca de Beneficiis, lib. vi. cap. 16.

reflect a little on the Great Men our Nation has produced, and who are utterly unknown but to the small Circle of the Learned. The *Nazarenes* in general believe, that our Brethren are plunged in the grossest Ignorance, and that Obstinacy is the sole Support of our Religion. Some of their Doctors have gone yet farther, and have taught a most extraordinary Doctrine incompatible with any sound Notions, even of the Divine Being. They say, that he permits the *Israelites* to remain in the State they are, that their persisting in their Faith, may serve as a Proof of that of the *Nazarenes*. Is it possible to advance any thing more apparently false? For let us suppose for a Moment, that the *Jewish* Religion were false, would it not still be ridiculous to suppose, that God damns a certain Number of Creatures, merely to afford the Means of Salvation to others? As if it were necessary for him to make use of so cruel a Stratagem to oblige some People, to stick to their Belief. The Vanity of the *Nazarenes* glares excessively, in their pretending to defend such an Opinion as this; they think it not enough; it seems, to treat us upon all Occasions with sovereign Contempt, but they would also make God participate with them in this sort of Usage, without reflecting, that such a Manner of acting is repugnant to his Essence. We need not be astonished, dear *Monceca*, at the Pride of some Philosophers, who would persuade us, that the Universe is made for Man alone; and that so many Worlds, exceeding in Size that which we inhabit, so many Suns, larger and brighter than that which enlightens our System, are scattered through the boundless Expanse, merely to entertain the Sight of one of us Worms upon the Earth. How absurd soever this Opinion may be, it is still less so, than to believe that God makes one Soul everlastingly

ingly miserable, that to another he may facilitate the Means of becoming eternally happy.

Visions of this stamp are so ridiculous, that there is nothing difficult in exposing them even to People of very moderate Abilities. But the *Nazarene* Divines are by no means for allowing us the Liberty of refuting their Errors. When one of our learned Men writes a Book in our Defence, our Adversaries are not only forbid the Reading of it, but in certain Countries they push this Severity so far as to hinder even ourselves from reaping the Benefit of such Instructions. In *Italy*, the *Jews* are forbid to have in their Custody *The Commentaries of Abarbinel on the minor Prophets*. You know as well as I do, dear *Monceca*, how excellent a Book that is, and that the more our Enemies condemn it, the more they represent it as dangerous, the more, with respect to us, they commend and applaud it. The Jealousy and Tyranny of their Priests hath not stopped at this single Prohibition; many of their Doctors have written, that it would be both useful and necessary to prohibit all the Books of *Abarbinel* to the *Jews*, because they are capable of confirming us in our Sentiments. Is it not, *Monceca*, a pleasant way of refuting a Book to suppress it? What Judgment do they think, I will not say the Learned, but even the middle sort of People, who use their Understandings, will pass on such a Conduct?

The *Nazarenes* have indeed Reason to fear the Spirit and the Learning of *Abarbinel*: That illustrious Rabbín was equal even to our famous *Maimonides*. What Spleen soever our Enemies have shewn against his Writings, they acknowledge, however, that where his Interpretations have nothing to do between them and their Controversies with the *Jews*, he is sublime, judicious, perspicuous, and full

of Candor. Can we expect any more? ought we to hope they will overturn their own Objections?

The Merit of *Abarbinel* was so great, that it overcame the Prejudices of many of the *Nazarenes*, insomuch that after his Death, many *Venetian* Noblemen did not disdain to attend his Funeral, which was celebrated by the principal *Jews* of *Padua*. It was in a Church-yard of that famous City that this famous *Jew* was buried, and some time after they interred *Juda Mentz* in the same Place. This Rabbi was also an illustrious Man. He died Rector of the Academy of *Padua*. All Persons of Letters agree, that he had a brisk and lively Imagination, and that he spoke and wrote with great Facility. But, however, he had not either the Knowledge of *Menassab Ben Israel*, or the profound Erudition of *Solomon Ben Virga*. The *Conciliator* of the first-mentioned Rabbi, is an excellent Work, and the History of the *Jews* composed by the latter, is a Piece worthy of the highest Esteem.

Abraham de Balmis deserves a distinguished Rank among the Learned of our Nation. That illustrious Physician was an excellent Grammarian, and an excellent Philosopher, composed a Book of the utmost Use of the Means of acquiring the Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Tongue. * A Christian Critique did not however spare this Great Man. As he had too much Candor to decide hastily upon

* *Abraham de Balmis nihil aliud agere mihi visus est quam veterum Doctrinam perpetuò convellere atque impugnare, magis insectando occupatus, quàm in docendo, at in dubium tantum vocare priscorum præceptiones; cum interrim nihil certi statuat, non dicere est, sed ridere. Munsterus in Præfatione Grammaticæ, apud Spizelii Felicem Literatum, p. 918.*

Things

Things which seemed to him to lie beyond the Reach of human Capacity, and as he chose to examine Things to the Bottom before he admitted them to be absolutely certain, they charged him with a Design of destroying all Systems, without intending to erect any thing in their stead. Thus because he was not rash and overbearing, they would needs have him a Sceptick.

The *Nazarenes* are so given to search out whatever may tarnish the Reputation of our Authors, that they seldom spare any. They seem especially to bend their Attacks against those who have most Merit. You know, my dear *Monecca*, that it is to the illustrious *Akiba* we stand indebted for all that is either true or reasonable in respect to the Oral Law; and though I am a *Caraites*, yet I must frankly own, that if nothing had been added to the Writings of this Great Man, all that he says, with respect to the written Law, ought to be received among all the different Sects of *Jews*. However, the Merit of *Akiba* is far from standing unimpeached by the *Nazarene* Doctors: They represent him as a crafty Fellow, a Cheat, and an Impostor. Such are the Appellations they bestow on a Rabbi, who by his Candor and Knowledge merits, that all true *Israelites* should agree in giving him the Title of *Sethunstaab*, or, *The Authentic*.

It must, however, be confessed, my dear *Monecca*, that if all the Books which the *Jews* attribute to *Akiba* were really and truly his, the *Nazarenes* would have abundant Reason to reject them, as full of Lyes and Fables. In this respect they would only follow the Example of the *Caraites*. For I must do so much Justice to the Skill and Merit of that Rabbi, as to stand persuaded, that all the Reveries in the *Talmud*, did not flow from him, as

from their Source, nor were originally collected from his Writings. It is very true, that *Akiba* was the first Compiler of the *Deutoroses*, or *Jewish Traditions*, and that he drew together and digested into one Work, what *Hillel*, *Simeon*, and other Doctors had written in different Treatises; but that learned Rabbi was far from collecting all the Extravagances which we now see in the *Talmud*. It was such who afterwards laboured in that Work who invented them, or at least had the Weakness to transmit them to Posterity. Even the most zealous Partizans of the *Talmud* are compelled to own, that *Akiba* was dead before Rabbi *Judah* composed the *Misna* or *Talmud* of *Jerusalem*; they pretend that this last-mentioned Rabbi was born the very Day the other died: But sure it is without all Foundation, that after having reported this, that they break out thus, when one Sun was eclipsed, another appeared in the Horizon*. I protest, dear *Monceca*, a Man must be prejudiced to a high degree, who can see any thing like an Equality between these *Jews*; and I must own to you, that even at the Time that I had no Thoughts of becoming a *Giraité*, I always looked on the one as a Man of Learning of the first Class†, and on the other as an Author of a very suspicious Authority. Heaven has at length been pleased to remove the Clouds which hindered my Sight, and I now clearly distinguish the Folly of those pretended Traditions, for

* *R. Juda Princeps natus est illo Die quo obiit R. Akiba, de quo alunt Sol exortus est, & Sol occidit.* Pezron, *Defence of the Antiquities of Times*, p. 76.

† *Hujus nomen (inquit Autor Libri Zemach David) exit ab uno extremo Mundi usque ad aliud, atque totam legem Oralem ex ejus ore accipimus.* König. *Bibliotheca Vetus & Nova*, p. 19.

which

which Reason I reject them. But before I took this Step, I was resolved to examine thoroughly into the Matter, that I might avoid doing that hastily which I might repent at leisure. I am therefore pretty positive that I had good Grounds for rejecting the *Talmud* and all its Dreams. At least, I flatter myself, that I omitted nothing in my Power, in order to discover and come at the Truth, and if I have been deceived, I trust that the *Deity*, who knows my good Intentions, will have Mercy upon me; for it appears absolutely impossible that he should have given any Authority for the puerile Observations dictated by our Rabbies. Can it be believed, that he would ever descend into a Tale of the Necessities to which we are subjected by the Structure of our Bodies? Is it not a most astonishing Folly, to place among the Number of religious Ceremonies our Manner of easing of Nature? However, some of our Rabbies have not been ashamed to write very copiously upon this Subject. In the first place, they have settled the Points of the Compass towards which these sort of Conveniences should be turned, and these are the *North* and *South*. Next it is settled, that we are not to remove our Garments but in a sitting Posture; this is the second Rule. And the third is, that in all Affairs of this Nature we use the Left, and not the Right Hand, which would be a grievous Offence; such, according to these Rabbins, are the sacred Mysteries of the Law, which are not to be dispensed with; and to give greater Weight to these Impertinencies, they are inserted in the Writings of *Akiba*, whom they have made the Author of these ridiculous Precepts, which doubtless he never thought of. For it is impossible to believe that a Man so truly learned as he was, should

have run into such low and pitiful Absurdities; but they were glad, no doubt, to lay hold of so venerable a Name as his, in order to give a Sanction to their Chimæras *.

The Rabbies, dear *Monceca*, have done as much Mischief to the *Jewish* Religion by their Impertinencies, as the Christian Monks have to theirs, by their deplorable and sometimes ridiculous Superstitions. The silly Works both of the one and the other, have prejudiced but too many People against all the Books in general, which treat of both Religions. They are so much scandalized at the Fooleries which they see not only tolerated, but approved and commended, that they cannot persuade themselves that there can be found any sensible Writers in those Communions, wherein some Members receive as useful and necessary Rules, such Follies and Extravagancies as are scarce pardonable in Idiots.

Thus, on account of a Prejudice fatal to the Learned amongst us, the *Nazarenes* will not be brought to distinguish between our Rabbies, but condemn them in the Lump. In the very same Manner the Protestants despise many excellent Works written by Catholick Divines, but sure with very little Reason. For instance, they slight the moral Essays of M. *Nicole*, the Sermons of *Bourdalone*, and many others, because they judge of all their Books of Piety by the Legend of

* *Dixit Akiba, Ingressus sum aliquando post Rabbi Josuam in sedis secreta locum & tria didici. Didici I. quod non versus orientem & occidentem, sed versus septentrionem & austrum, convertere nos debemus. Didici II. quod non in pedes erectum, sed jam confidentem, se rotare lineat. Didici III. quod Podex non dextrâ sed sinistrâ manu abstergendus sit . . . Legis hæc Arcana sunt. Barajetha, in Massech. Beruchot, fol. 62.*

St.

St. Francis, the Life of *Mary Alacoque*, the Works of the Monk *Cæsarius*, those of the *Jesuits Outerman* and *Gazeus*, the *Mystical City of God*, by *Mary d'Agreda*, and such like. On the other hand, it must be allowed, that there are very few Papists who will be at the pains of distinguishing between the learned and judicious Protestants, and those Visionaries who wait for the Accomplishment of the pretended Prophecies of *Jurieu*, or such-like Rhapsodies. Such are the unhappy Effects of that Prejudice which weak and wicked Writers beget in others against the Religion they profess.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, live easy and contented, and mayest thou be always prosperous.

From *Cairo*.



LETTER CXLIV.

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraites*, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.

I HAVE within these few Days, my dear *Monceca*, contracted an Acquaintance with a *Samaritan Jew*. He has set me right as to abundance of Things, of which till now I had but very confused Ideas. I looked upon the *Samaritans* in general as Hereticks plunged in an Abyss of Errors. I believed that none of their Ceremonies did at all resemble those of the ancient *Israelites*; nay, I would scarce admit that their former Worship had any thing

thing in common with that of the *Jews*. These Prejudices of mine are entirely dissipated, and I am thoroughly satisfied that I have been in an Error.

Of all the *Jewish* Sects, the *Samaritans* differ least in their Customs from those of our Ancestors. Most of these People live at *Gaza*, *Damascus*, *Cairo*, but principally at *Sichem*, now called *Neapolis*. They offer Sacrifices upon *Mount Gerizim*, affirming positively that this is the chosen Place of the Lord. They not only cite, in Defence of this their Opinion, a Passage of their *Pentateuch**, which they charge our Ancestors with corrupting, by putting *Mount Hebal*, whence the Curses were to be pronounced, for *Mount Gerizim*, whence the Blessings were to be derived. But they insist also on Prescription, on the uninterrupted Succession of their High-Priests, on Tradition, on History, and † on the tacit Confession of the Author of the Christian Law, who did not dispute or deny the Truth of what the *Samaritan* Woman alledged, that their Fathers worshipped on *Mount Gerizim*‡. This Reproach of Corruption, which our Ancestors threw by wholesale on this poor People, has been adopted by certain learned Men among the *Nazarenes*, without reflecting that the establishing this Proposition as a Truth, would be equally prejudicial to them and to us. As I am fully persuaded of this, I should be glad, after reading my Letter, if you would give me your Thoughts upon the Matter.

The *Samaritan* from whom I learned all these Particulars, assured me, that their Priests are to this Day of the Race of *Aaron*; and that they never

* Deuteron. xxvii. 4.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. iv. cap. ult. & lib. xiii. cap. 6.

‡ 1. John iv. 21, 22.

intermarry out of that Family, that they may not sully the Honour of their Descént. He tells us likewise, that the Altar on which they sacrificed, is the very same which was built by the *Israelites* immediately after their Passage over *Jordan*. I must own to you, dear *Monceca*, that I can scarce give Credit to the Antiquity and Authenticity of these Stories; but rather think it a Tale fit to be inserted among the fabulous Collections of the Rabbies. If indeed any thing could give it Weight, it must be that wonderful Care and Industry with which the *Samaritans* have always preserved the Customs of their Ancestors, and whatever came down to them with the venerable Stamp of Antiquity. They yet keep up and make use of the ancient *Hebrew* Characters, which differ much from those that are in Use with us, and which were the Invention of *Esdra*s, after the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity.

You will easily apprehend, my dear *Monceca*, that People so much attached as the *Samaritans* are to the Customs of our earliest Ancestors, are far enough from admitting as Rules of Faith, all the Reveries of the *Talmud*. Far from adopting the Sentiments of the Rabbies, they go yet farther than the *Caraites*, and acknowledge no Scriptures but the first Books of *Moses*, looking on the rest of the sacred Code, as written by pious Men under the immediate Direction of Heaven, but yet of no decisive Authority with respect to Matters of Faith. It is easy to perceive that the *Samaritans* run into a gross Error in this respect: For since they admit that these Books were really written by the Persons whose Names they bear, and that their Authors were pious Men, influenced by the Spirit of God, why should they hesitate at admitting the Authority
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of the Books themselves? If it could once be made out to the *Caraites*, that those who composed the *Talmud* were Persons of Wisdom and Learning, they would receive it without Delay; much more if it could be made appear, that the Rabbies by whom it was composed were enlightened by the Spirit of God.

It is necessary, dear *Monceca*, when one would avoid giving a blind Obedience to whatsoever is contained in a Book, to alledge that its Author was a mere Man and uninspired. For when once it is admitted, that a Book was written by Inspiration, absolute Submission is due thereto. It is ridiculous to attempt to range in different Classes, such Pieces as have fallen from the Pens of inspired Men. For we cannot believe that Men are more or less inspired, or that whatever they receive by Inspiration ought to be received with any different Degree of Credit.

A famous *German* Divine went very near asserting this erroneous Opinion*. In the Heat of a Dispute, he advanced a Proposition with which his Adversaries for ever after reproached him. He affirmed, that a certain Work, written by an ancient Divine, whom the *Nazarenes* suppose to be one of their Apostles, was low, poor, and little better than Chaff, in comparison of the Writings of other Doctors†. His Enemies did not fail to attack him vigorously on his maintaining so evident a Falshood. In the end, he was obliged to acknowledge his Error; and at this Day the most zealous of his Disciples readily admit that he committed a very great Fault, in endeavouring to establish a Senti-

* *Luther.*

† The Epistle general of St. *James*.

ment,

ment, so directly opposite to Reason*. This Divine, in order, to deliver himself from some Difficulties, durst not deny the Credit of the Book which made against him; but then he diminished it as much as he could, and made it much inferior to another Book which appeared to favour his own Sentiments.

Strange is the Effect of that blind Prejudice into which even the greatest Men are apt to fall, through an over-hasty Desire of supporting whatever they advance! Is it possible to find out a greater Absurdity than this of distinguishing Degrees of Wisdom in the Spirit of God? Or can there be any thing more opposite to Common Sense than this Notion, of giving more or less Credit to divinely-inspired Writings, as they agree more or less with our own Opinions?

I know, my dear *Monaca*, that the Rabbins and the *Caraites*, far from imitating the impious Boldness of certain *Nazarenes*, or the ill-founded Scruples of the *Samaritans*, preserve equally for the Books of the sacred Code, an infinite Respect, without pretending to judge by the light of their Reason of the Worth of any of the inspired Writings. But in avoiding this Error they have run into another, which is common to them and to the *Nazarene* Doctors; that is to say, they tear and torture cer-

* *Cam autem illud legissem, non rem dissimulavi, sed fatebar in responsione mea ad Gregorium Martinum. In illa quidem Præfatione scribit Lutherum, S. Jacobi Epistolam non posse dignate certare cum Epistolis S. S. Petri & Pauli, sed Epistolam stramineam, si cum aliis comparatur. Quam ejus sententiam non probo, atque in recentioribus Editionibus cum omissa sint illa verba, opinor ipsum postea Lutherum hanc suam sententiam improbasse. Whitakeri Respons. ad Rainoldi Refutationem, p. 103.*
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tain Passages, in order to bring them to favour their Sentiments, and by this means they vouch all the Vapours of their heated Imaginations by these forced Applications of the Holy Writings, insomuch that there is nothing so absurd, not only with regard to Rites and Ceremonies, but also with respect to the Doctrines of Religion, which they do not attempt to prove in this Manner.

Is it, for example, possible to find out any thing more wild and extravagant than the Rabbinical Interpretation of this Verse in the Psalms? *Behold, I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin hath my Mother conceived me.* Instead of going into the Opinion of the Nazarene Doctors, who have fully proved, that the Prophet speaks here of that original Blemish derived to all Men from their first Parents, they will needs have it, that *Jesse* the Father of *David* begat him in Adultery, though on his own Wife, whom he took to have been one of her Maid-Servants, upon whose Chastity he had attempted. Is not this, dear *Monceca*, a fine Explication of so clear and easy a Text? And what Opinion may we not expect to see supported by Scripture Proofs, alledged by the Rabbins, when out of the plainest Things, they can forge such romantick Adventures, and gravely deliver so extraordinary a Story as this of the pretended Adultery of *David's* Father, though there be not a Word of it in the holy Books?

An *Italian Jew* not only adopted this fabulous Tale, in a Work which he published, but even attempted to carry it further than any of his Brethren had done, by making a pretty long Dissertation to prove, forsooth, that *Jesse* had done perfectly well, in endeavouring to go to Bed to his Maid, because his Wife was grown pretty far in Years, and as he
 appre-

apprehended past Child-bearing*. This Sentiment, my Friend, contains an excellent Moral, and if these wise and honest Rabbins would but effectually establish it, it would in all human probability contribute pretty much to the raising Servants Wages, in consideration of the Likelihood of their finding more Employment than at present.

Confess then, dear *Monceca*, that we *Caraites* have some Reason to reject these Rabbinical Comments; though as yet you are attached to their Sect, it is impossible you should not see their Errors. That Uneasiness and Embarrassment which naturally attends a Man's changing his Religion, keeps you as yet in the wrong Track; but as I earnestly wish, so I sincerely hope, that the God of our Fathers will afford you his victorious Grace, which he vouchsafes to such as he leads to the Knowledge of the Truth; and that thereby breaking the Chains which for the present bind you to the Rabbins, you shall come and range yourself under the Banner of the *Caraites*, who are not only the true *Jews*, but almost the sole People in the World who submit their Judgments to the Divine Writings, without attempting to abuse these, in order to establish their own Opinions.

Many of the *Nazarene* Doctors, as also of the Cadies and Musties among the Musselmen, run into the same Fault with the Rabbies. They do not submit their Opinions to those contained in the Writings which they believe inspired, but explain all these Works in a manner conformable to their own

* *Il Pensiero d' Isai era buono, perche essendo la Patrona vecchia, e la Massera giovane, haveva Desiderio di haver altri Figliuoli. Percetti da esser imparati dalla Donne Ebreë, p. 69.*

Notions.

Notions, infomuch that ten Divines, each of a different Opinion, shall equally pretend to support his own Doctrines by Authority of Scripture; and it is this Conduct, so inconsistent with publick Peace and publick Safety, that hath occasioned so many religious Wars, and such Broils and Disturbances in States.

The *Nazarenes* would be happy, my dear *Monceca*, if they did but observe the same Laws with us *Caraites*, who never venture to write any Commentaries on the Sacred Scriptures. It is held with us a Profanation, to mingle human Opinions with Divine Laws. The *Caraites* believe implicitly whatsoever they find in the Scriptures, without pretending to penetrate their Obscurities, but submitting their Understandings, when they meet with Passages which transcend them. But for this wise and easy Maxim, they would at this Day be as full of Trouble and Confusion as other Sects. They would have a Train of Doctors differing in Opinions, and darkening by their Discourses the Points they pretended to illustrate, till by degrees so many and such arduous Doubts would be brought into People's Heads, as in the end would lead them either into Scepticism, or Irreligion.

In order to prove the Inutility of Commentaries on the Sacred Writings, there is nothing more requisite than to shew, that they are calculated to do more Hurt than Good. Now there is nothing easier, than to produce the strongest Evidence in favour of this Proposition. It must, in the first place, be laid down as a Principle, that since God has been pleased to give certain Laws and Rules to Mankind, he has likewise been pleased to explain himself in a Manner clear and intelligible: For it would be absurd to say, that God had revealed his Will to Man in such a Manner, as that it was impossible it should be

be comprehended. Nor is it less unreasonable to say, that God commanded Men to obey him, but however did not desire they should obey him. If therefore we are bound to acknowledge, that God hath revealed his Will to Men in Terms perfectly intelligible, why should we attempt to explain them more clearly? A *Divine*, a *Rabbi*, a *Mufti*, or a *Bronze*, do they understand the Extent of Men's Capacities better than he who made them? If he had intended to teach Men the Mysteries which these sort of People propagate, he would without question have taught them plainly.

But it may be said, that many of the Sacred Books are written evidently in a very obscure Stile, and in which there are many Things not to be understood. These, without question, were given by God to Men for some Use or other; and how shall this Use be made of them, if they are not understood? It is necessary therefore to enquire into their hidden Sense.

This Manner of Reasoning, dear *Monceca*, is however false and captious. If there are in the Scripture certain Passages which we do not understand, we ought to conclude that they are not necessary to our Salvation, because we cannot perform what we are not informed of, and it is in vain for us to endeavour to penetrate those Secrets which Providence hath but half revealed. Heaven knows that it is for our Good that we should not have clear Ideas of some Things, and when Men would penetrate into these, this Crime of theirs is punished by their feeling themselves bewildered. The *Nazarene* Doctors who have employed their Pens in writing Commentaries on the *Revelations*, a very obscure Piece, which they believe sacred, afford a clear Proof of the Truth of what I say.

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The Protestants make this Book the Basis of all their Invectives against the Papists, and the Papists again make use of the same Book, in order to point out their Adversaries in the most odious Colours *. Is it possible to make a worse, or a more unwarrantable use of such Works as are supposed to be dictated by the Deity himself?

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, live content and happy, and beware of indulging a rash Spirit of Curiosity.

Cairo.

* The *Revelations* hath been in all times one of the principal Books whence the Divines have drawn abundantly injurious Expressions, in order to pelt those against whom they had a Spite. What is still more singular, is, that the Rabbies also have profited of these Obscurities in the *Revelations*. They pretend that this Book was written by one of their Brethren, in order to deceive the primitive Christians. See in respect to this Subject the Letter CLX. Vol. V. as also the 4th Letter of the *Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters*. In which Letters this remarkable Point of History is fully discussed, and the original Passages from the Rabbins also are there produced at large.

LETTER



LETTER CXLV.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *English*, dear *Isaac*, are not satisfied with enjoying uninterrupted Liberty in this Life: They think also they ought to be permitted to quit it when their Misfortunes press them too closely, whenever they grow tired of it, or of what passes therein. I was prodigiously surprized at my first Arrival, at the frequent Accounts I heard of such Deaths. It sometimes happened, that a Man I had conversed with in the Evening, thought proper to cut his Throat next Day. Such as brought the News of this Accident, instead of appearing astonished, generally approved the Action made as it was. If I enquired what the Reasons were, which determined the distracted Creature to take away his own Life; *We know not*, answered they coldly, *it is very probable he did not like his Situation in this World, and had a mind to see how they went on in the other. His Life was his own, and acting as he did, he hurt no body but himself.*

I fancied for a good while, that such as thus took it in their Heads to make away with themselves did it in consequence of Distraction, and I was very far from imagining that the *English* hanged themselves, or cut their Throats after mature Deliberation; but by the many unhappy Instances I have seen, and by the

the Relations I have had from Persons of undoubted Credit, I am convinced it is even so.

About two Years ago a working Man and his Wife being both weary of the Troubles they endured here, determined to put an End to them. They had a Daughter of about five or six Years of Age. They thought it but reasonable not to leave her exposed to those Mischiefs which they found too hard for themselves: On mature Consideration, they resolved that she should make the Voyage with them. When they had once settled and adjusted all Things necessary for the Execution of their Design, they determined to justify it to the Publick. Hereupon, they composed a Narrative of their Misfortunes, entered into a long Detail of the Miseries under which they had laboured, and the Causes of their dying as they did. They complained, that in spite of their utmost Endeavours in an honest way, they found it impossible for them to subsist; that they were more distressed the more they strove against their hard Fortunes. That, in fine, they saw but one Way left to avoid doing base Things, and to this they had Recourse, beseeching God, to whom, in quitting Life, they bequeathed their departing Souls, to have Mercy upon them, as they firmly trusted he would. Having finished this their Apology, they first cut the Throat of their Daughter, and then hanged themselves.

This pernicious Custom of making themselves away, is far from being peculiar to the meaner sort of People, the Great are not exempt therefrom: Men of Figure and Quality now and then cut their Throats, as well as other Folks, purely because the World is no longer pleasant to them. And so far is this from drawing any Reflections

or

or Stain upon their Memories, that they find very often Numbers who approve and applaud them.

You cannot imagine, dear *Isaac*, for what slight Reasons the *English* dispatch themselves. Some Months ago, here was a Man who did his Business, because truly a new Duty was laid upon Strong Waters. He would live no longer forsooth, since *Geneva* was to be dearer. I am credibly informed of the Truth of a still stranger Business. An *Englishman* on reviewing his Life, fancied he saw in it a tedious Repetition of the same things. *What*, said he, *have I been doing all my Days? I rise in the Morning; I eat and drink at Noon; I walk about all Day, and at Night I go to Bed; this without Alteration, is my Course of Life. Part of my Time is spent in dressing and undressing. A fine Piece of Drudgery truly! Come, come, I am quite jaded with this endless insipid Part I am to act, and will even quit it and the World together.* This Resolution once taken, our *Englishman*, to rid himself of his Weariness, took up a Pistol and shot himself through the Head. Without doubt you must apprehend that a Man who destroyed himself on so slight an Account was looked on with Horror. No such thing, the Bravery he shewed in meeting his Fate, gained him the Reputation of a Hero. But if it had been known that he discovered any Reluctancy or Apprehensions at the drawing near of Death, it would have lessened his Reputation. In vain had he killed himself, his Effort would have been looked on with Contempt. He who would acquire the Character of a Man of Courage in *England*, must not only do the greatest Crimes, but must also do them without any Signs of Shame or Repentance.

Some Years ago a *Frenchman* killed himself, but without deriving any Reputation from it; on

the contrary, he had the Misfortune before he expired to hear himself loaded with the heaviest Reproaches. He had, unhappily for him! taken it into his Head to imitate the *English*. Whenever he heard of a Man who had cut his Throat, he felt an inward Motion of Envy, which at the same time stimulated him to follow so glorious an Example. *You shall see one of these Days*, said he to his Family, *something will surprize you. I shall convince the World the French have as high Spirits as the English. Yes, yes, this is a Task I take upon me.* As he explained himself no farther, his Friends and Family could not divine what it was he meant. After some Deliberation, he at length fully determined to vindicate the Honour of the *French Nation*, which he conceived to be excessively tarnished by their want of Resolution to kill themselves. Accordingly he took a Razor, and when he was left alone attempted to cut his Throat. But wanting Courage thoroughly to do his Work, he only gave himself a large Wound, and as soon as he saw the Blood stream, he called in People to assist him. Some *English* who amongst others ran in, instead of affording him Help, began to insult him. *These French Dogs*, said they, *would needs imitate us, and yet have not the Courage to cut a Throat as it should be. Look now, look at this cowardly Scoundrel, he has not cut deep enough by half an Inch.* While the *English* were making these fine Reflections, in came the Relations of the wounded Person. A Surgeon was sent for, but to no purpose. His Care had no Effect, the poor Man after two days Torture died, and died without demonstrating that Equality he talked of.

I am out of all Patience, dear *Isaac*, when I see People who use their Senses to so good Purpose in other Matters of Moment, neglect the use of them

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in Things of the last Importance, and run into so extraordinary an Absurdity as to applaud such Madmen, as for very light Subjects of Chagrin attempt upon their own Lives. Not to treat the Memory of such a Man with proper Indignity, who throws away his Life without any real Necessity, is foolishly to approve Actions the most cruel and unnatural, which either Melancholy or a brutal Disposition can suggest. For from these Sources flow, in Fact, those Effects which the *English* would willingly attribute to Greatness of Soul, and particularly this Propensity to Self-Murder. All those bitter Reflections by which they are led to this Extremity of Folly, are the Produce of a dark, fullen, cloudy Temper of Mind, and of a fierce Humour incapable of supporting with Constancy the slightest Change of Fortune. It is therefore not through Courage, but through Weakness rather, that the *English* dispatch themselves as they do. To say the Truth, there is much more Spirit requisite to support generously an unforeseen Adversity, than to rid one's self of it by violent Means.

The Crime of such People as murder themselves is inexcusable. look upon it in what Light you will. If we consider it as Philosophers, we discover an exceeding Weakness no way fit to enter into Comparison with that Firmness of the great Men of Antiquity, who died indeed bravely, but did not die unless they were forced to it for the Preservation of their Country, or their Glory. Never did any *Greek* or *Roman* cut his Throat out of too quick a Sense of private Misfortunes. The same Hero who threw himself into a Gulph to avert the Danger of *Rome*, would have supported any private and personal Misfortunes, without ever thinking of a violent Death by way of Discharge. *Marius* is an Example of a great Man enduring Adversity

without any Meanness. How many *Englishmen* would have dispatched themselves into the other World under such a Persecution as that of *Sylla*? Proscribed, pursued, reduced to the hard Necessity of hiding himself in a filthy Morass, *Marius* still waited the Decision of his Fate from Heaven, and thought it no way worthy of his heroick Courage, to seek in Death a Refuge from his Sorrows.

I am, dear *Isaac*, more charmed with the Courage and Firmness of a certain *Spaniard*, than with this Ferocity they disguise under the Name of a great Spirit. This Man with much Industry laboured for twenty Years together, to scrape up as much as might keep him comfortably in his old Age. Fortune, however, in an Instant stripped him of all that he had been saving. A Merchant whom he had entrusted with his All broke, and left him not worth a Groat. A hundred *English* would have resolved on a Leap in the Dark at such News. The *Spaniard* wiser, and of a juster Turn of Thought, determined to conquer Adversity, and to make his Destiny ashamed of her Injustice. Preserving therefore his Moderation and wonted Resolution, he said, presenting a Cord to Fortune, *Here is a Rope, foolish Slut, take it and go hang thyself, since thou art not able to make me have Recourse to hanging.*

If, on the other Hand, we reflect on this Practice of Self-murder, as it regards Society and the publick Tranquillity, we shall find it extremely pernicious, and capable of producing great Mischiefs. What Revolutions, what Confusions, what Dangers may we not fear in a Country where People not only get over all Apprehensions of Death, but of all that is to happen after it? It is most certain, that a Man who is neither afraid of going hence, or of
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the Place to which he may go, is capable of doing strange Things before he takes his Journey. There are no other ways of restraining People, but by Religion or the Fear of Death. Now when both these Cords are broke in any Society, what Disorders may there not be expected? A Man who has committed the greatest Crimes which can be imagined, may make a Jest of all legal Punishments however severe, if he only uses so much Precaution, as to provide himself with the Means of putting an end to his Life as soon as apprehended. Murders, Robberies, Assassinations must be frequent. Kings themselves are not safe on their Thrones. It is the Nature of those Torments to which such as attempt on the Persons of Princes are reserved, that deters Parricides and Traytors from such Acts much more than the Thoughts of dying. The last Words of *Clement* the Monk who assassinated *Henry III.* are clear Proofs of this. *I bless God,* cried that Monster, while the Soldiers stabbed him, *that I die so easily; for I did not hope so quick a Passage out of this Life, or to escape at such a Rate.*

It must be confessed, dear *Isaac*, that there can be nothing more dangerous to a State, than to have in it a Set of People not to be restrained by any Fear of Punishment. For one whom a Sense of Honour and Probity keeps within the Bounds of Justice, there are a hundred restrained by Fear. It cannot be denied, that Men are more inclined to Evil than to Good. All Customs, all Usages which tend to weaken these Bands, are prejudicial to Society. How much therefore ought we to abhor a Crime which opens a Door to all sorts of Evils? And can it be esteemed less than Madness to give this Crime the Titles of Courage and Greatness of Soul?

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, and mayest thou always use thy Reason in thy Adversity.

London.



L E T T E R CXLVI.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraite, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

IT seems to me, dear *Isaac*, that the tragick Poets among the *French* are as much superior to the *English*, as the Philosophers of the former Nation are inferior to those of the latter. I find as great a Difference between *Shakespear* and *Corneille*, *Addison* and *Racine*, as between *Descartes* and *Newton*, *Locke* and *Mallebranche*. It is not that the Poets of this Country want Fire, or a lively Imagination; on the contrary, they have a great deal of Spirit and Force. But the mischief of it is, that when they have raised themselves up to Heaven, they are immediately dazzled with their own Height, sink all on a sudden as swiftly as they rose, and fully by their Fall the Honours they have acquired. As they have not the least Knowledge of the Rules, or if they affect to despise them, we need not be surprized that they are unable to conduct in a proper Manner that Strength of Fancy which they derive from Nature.

Whatever Fecundity of Invention! Whatever Sprightliness of Wit! Whatever Boldness of Sentiment there may be! yet Regularity is wanting in
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all Arts. The meanest Architect who follows the Rules of *Palladio*, will succeed much better than a Mason who has Genius, but who is notwithstanding ignorant and rash. The little Church of *St. Justina* of *Padua*, affords the Eye more Pleasure than the Pyramids of *Egypt*. Monuments of Grandeur indeed! but which have a stronger Relish of *Eastern Barbarism* than of the Graces of the *Greeks* and *Romans*.

Such is the State, dear *Isaac*, of the *English* Theatre. I have seen there a great deal of Genius, and yet very few good Pieces: They play every Day at *London* a kind of horrible Farces, to which without Hesitation they give the pompous Names of Tragedies. I have seen in a very fine *English* Play, three Witches introduced in the oddest Manner imaginable, and pretending to boil Herbs together in a Caldron. I have sometimes seen the Stage in the Light of a Church-yard, and Grave-Diggers diverting themselves with tossing Skulls of dead Persons about; nay, and which is ten times worse, I have seen this applauded.

Dryden, and above all *Addison*, hath taken pains to teach this barbarous *Melpomene* a little Manners. But in spite of all their Care, their Tragedy has still too much of a savage Appearance. It seems they are not able to attain that modest and majestic Air which heretofore distinguished the *Greeks*, as it now does the *French* Poets. Figure to yourself, dear *Isaac*, the strange Alteration made when *Voltaire's* Tragedy of *Zara* came to be played on the *English* Stage; they were forced to make that young Princess tear off her Hair by Handfuls, and roll herself on the Stage as if she had been in Fits. One would think, that an Author had little Obligation to a Translator for such extravagant Additions. The *English* Poet, however, was forced to

accommodate the Piece to the Genius of his Nation; that is, to make it succeed he made it ridiculous. In short, to obtain Applause at *London*, it is absolutely necessary to exhibit beautiful Monsters. If you keep too near Truth, it will never do.

Yet this does not arise from a want of Liking to natural Descriptions; there are in *Shakespear* numberless Passages extremely just, and every way perfect. But what then? If these continue any time, the Audience grow sick of them, and their Attention must be awakened by something wonderful and out of the common Road.

Within these few Years, the *English* have had Poets who have written very regular Pieces; but they have not succeeded, because the Audience thought them languishing and cold: In truth, I do not think they did them wrong; they were so in Fact; and one would be apt to think, on seeing these modern Tragedies, that the *English* Poets had a Faculty of straining their Subjects, falling beyond Truth and Nature to shew the Force of their Genius, and to be under a necessity of mingling in their best Pieces the greatest Beauties and the greatest Faults. *It seems*, says a modern Author*, *that the English Genius hitherto hath produced only irregular Beauties. Shakespear's shining Monsters are a thousand times more pleasing than the Wisdom of modern Poets. In short, the English Poetry resembles a luxuriant Tree, which in its natural State throws out a multitude of Branches, and gives unequal Marks of a prodigious Force, and yet dies if you attempt to put a Force upon Nature, and to bring it into the Mode of the Garden at Marli.*

How far off soever the *English* Poets may be from the Perfection and Merit, which must be

* *Voltaire, Lettres Philosophiques*, Let. xviii. p. 162:
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allowed to those who have cultivated the *French* Tragedy; it is not however impossible, that some time or other they should reach, nay, go beyond them. That Time will come, nay, I am persuaded it is near at hand, when the *English* shall correct all their Errors. Their Genius still remains, they begin by degrees to accustom themselves to the Rules, and they will in time arrive at Perfection in an Art which hitherto they have not understood. In process of time they will join the Wisdom, Majesty, Purity, and Decency of the *French* Theatre, to the Strength, the Sublimity, and the pathetick Energy of the *English* Tragedy, with an Exclusion of whatsoever is monstrous, mean, or ridiculous. The Poets of this Country have a great Advantage over others, by their introducing so much Action in their Plays; many even of the best *French* Pieces are in truth but Conversations in five Acts, which we read with greater Pleasure than we see, because the Action languishes for want of a proper Variety of Incidents.

The Theatres of *Paris* and *London* seem to me perfect Representations of the Characters of the two Nations: At *Paris* they speak, at *London* they act. It is not therefore at all wonderful, that the *French* should speak better than the *English*, because every Man is Master of his own Trade. For this very Reason, the amorous Intrigues in the *French* Pieces are better wrought and conducted than in the *English*. We may venture after the same manner to determine on the Merit of the two Theatres: The Character of the *French* is Tendernefs, Love is their prevailing Passion, it is their principal Occupation, and Gallantry is the Soul of the Court. The Language of the Heart is naturally that of the Ladies, and though they will now and then contradict it a little in their Behaviour, yet there is not one of

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them who will yield in the Dignity of her Expression to the Heroine of a Romance. It is a common thing at *Paris*, to meet with a female *Platonick*, who reasons with the greatest Delicacy on the Inconsistency between the Communications of Sense and Affections in Persons of distinguished Birth; affirming, that Love is confined only to the Heart and to the Thoughts; and yet makes her Appointments every Night.

In *France* the Men speak and act in the same Manner with the Fair Sex: They declaim against Infidelity: They sometimes affect to condemn a Woman who has tript. In short, there are certain Moments when you would take a *French Petit-Maitre* for the Original whence a Romance Character had been drawn. But if you watch his Motions, or consider his Conduct but for four-and-twenty Hours, you shall be able to detect him in twenty Breaches of his System of amorous Morality.

It is natural, dear *Isaac*, in a Country where the Language, the Arts, the Tricks and Cheats of Love, are so well understood, that they should be also well expressed. A Painter who works after excellent Models, and who has Nature always before his Eyes, will shew more Spirit, and add more Graces to his Figures, than he who paints from Idea, and the sole Strength of Imagination. *Racine* felt that Love which he so well expresses in his Verses. He said in Prose to *Chamellé* *, all that as a Poet he says to his Heroines. We owe to his Constitution and the Taste of his Nation a great Part of those Beauties which we admire in his Works. If he had been an *Englishman*, he would

* A celebrated Actress, with whom *Racine* was in Love.

without

without doubt have wanted this Advantage. He must, in order to have pleased, have sought some other Method of moving the Spectators than by tender Scenes, or he would have run the Risque of failing, or falling into the Error of *Addison* at least. The *Cato* of that Author is a most perfect Piece, if we take away a cold Love-Scene, which serves only to hinder the Attention due to the rest of the Play. If *Corneille* had been an *English* Writer, he would have lost much less than *Racine*; because he had all the Talents necessary to succeed on an *English* Theatre. The last Act of his *Rhodogune* is a Master-piece which ought to be admired every where, but seems particularly calculated for *London*.

The *English* Poets have Strokes as beautiful and as sublime as any in *Corneille*, but then they are not so equal; if that Author falls, it is neither so frequent, nor so perceptible; the *French* Poet may be indeed low in some Places, but the *English* are very often ridiculous. One is surprized at *Paris* to see so great a Genius as *Corneille* making use, even in his best Pieces, of low Expressions; and we are apt to censure pretty freely, such Thoughts of his as appear to be below the Dignity of *English* Tragedy. How often have the following Lines in his *Nicomedes* been burlesqued?

*Madame, encore un coup, cet Homme est—il a vous;
Et, pour vous divertir, est il si necessaire,
Que vous ne lui puissies ordonner de se taire?*

But what would our *Parisians*, who are so nice as to Style, say, if they were to see the *Julius Cæsar* of *Shakespear* represented on their Stage, in which there is a Scene where the Coblers and Taylors converse with *Brutus* and *Cassius*?

The same Reason which incline People at *Paris* to pass by the Faults of the great *Corneille*, serve at *London* to excuse those of *Shakespeare*, and other Tragick Poets; their ravishing and sublime Beauties strike us so much, that for the sake of them we pass by their Faults. It is true, the *English* Authors seem to stand in need of more Indulgence than the *French*; but as the Taste of that Nation is not entirely formed, many Things are as yet allowed, which will not pass in Times to come.

Love is in Possession of the Theatre at *London*, as well as *Paris*, and there are few modern Pieces in which it has not a large Share. But as I have already told you, dear *Isaac*, the *English* Poets have not so well succeeded in describing the Motions of that Passion, as in painting those of Greatness of Soul, Valour, and of Publick Spirit. The Character of *Cato* in *Addison's* Tragedy, is perhaps the most beautiful that ever appeared on the Theatre: That of *Pompey* in *Cinna*; that of *Burrhus* in *Britannicus*; nay, even that of *Joash* in *Athaliah*, is not so shining. Yet each of these Tragedies is more perfect than that of the *English* Author; because he had the Weakness to please the Women, who decide all Things as well at *London* as at *Paris*, to introduce tender Speeches, though he was unacquainted with the Language of Love. This has occasioned his enervating the fiercest Tragedy that perhaps ever appeared on any Stage.

When the Science of *Sophocles* and of *Euripides* comes to be thoroughly understood in *England*, it will be much more difficult for their Poets than for the *French*, to produce any thing that is excellent, and capable of satisfying the Taste of the Nation. They will then be obliged to have Complacency enough to treat of certain Subjects, and to speak of some Matters where their Wit will not shine, as in
other

other Things, when the Spectator has been moved by some impetuous Speeches ; when he has felt the Force of poetick Terror, and has been ravished by Strokes truly divine, he must still be softened by the Complaints of an unfortunate Love, in order to satisfy the Ladies and the young People. It will be more difficult to touch this last Passion than any of the rest, and there will seldom appear a Genius capable of doing it.

It seems that the reigning Philosophy, and the favourite System of Politicks, maintains in *England* the same Authority on the Stage as in other Places. Their Poets are much more Citizens of their own Country than of *Parnassus*, and it is easy to discover the Party they embrace in all their Pieces.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live happy and content.

London.



L E T T E R CXLVII.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

WE see no such thing, dear *Isaac*, in this Country, as People's disappearing no-body knows how ; and being carried from their Families, by a Minister's Order, are suffered to sigh out the Remainder of their Days, under the Weight of Arbitrary Power, in Prisons where no Mortal can find them. A Tradesman of *London* has no Apprehension of being condemned without a Hearing ; they cannot

cannot keep a Man here, even in the *Tower*, without due Course of Law. A *Lettre-de-cachet* * is here an unintelligible Term. Happy Country, wherein *Fear* belongs only to the *Guilty*!

A private Man in this Kingdom is in no sort of Fear of being falsely accused by any wicked Rascal, kidnapped thereupon from his House, and not allowed a Hearing, till after a long Confinement. The Prejudices, nay even the Hatred of the Great, and of the Priests, are harmless here. As long as a Man is honest, and does nothing to the Prejudice of Society, he is under the Protection of the Laws, and till he violates them, he needs be in no Pain. An *Englishman* needs not in the Evening run over in his Mind whatever passed in the Day's Conversation, from a Dread of being hampered two or three Years after for an unguarded Expression. He acts and speaks freely, and may, in case he says nothing injurious to the Laws, give his Opinion freely on any Subject. If a Minister does any thing amiss, he condemns it roundly. Inasmuch as he is a Member of Society, the Law presumes him honest, permits that he speak his Sentiments to his Friends, and secures him from falling into the Hands of a lawless Statesman, whose Power sanctifies his Errors, and stamps Authority on his wrong Steps.

They commend, dear *Isaac*, in this Country, the Great, if they have Merit. By the same Rule they blame them if they have none, or if their good Qualities are exceeded by their bad ones. If Cardinal *Fleury* was Prime Minister in *England*, the People of *London* would do him Justice, they would

* A *Lettre-de-cachet* is a Mandate, by which a Person is banished, or committed to Prison, by the Royal Authority, not unlike our Warrants from a Secretary of State.

unanimously commend his Abilities, his Prudence, his Integrity, his Disinterestedness, his Love for Peace, and his Regard for his Master's Glory. But if instead of this truly-illustrious Minister, they had Cardinal *Du Bois* at the Head of their Affairs, they would without scruple expose his Conduct, nor shew him a grain the greater Respect on account of his Purple. In the midst of all his Greatness, he discovered the Vices of a pedantick Life, and very ill became the Rank to which he was raised; as much above his Merit as his Birth. Whatever Liberty they might think fit to take with such a Minister, they would have been so far from fearing its costing them their Lives, that they would not have expected so much as a short Exile. At *Paris*, however, they would have had more Tenderness for a Man who had violated all the Laws, than one who had spoken freely of the notorious Vices of that Priest; whom at this Day all the World condemns: The Great and the Mob agree in detesting his ill Qualities. They cannot help admiring how he came to arrive at the Helm. Yet, could he revive and be again possessed of Power, most of those who now censure him so freely, would run as servilely as ever to offer him Incense; the Terror of a *Lettre-de-cachet* for a rash Expression, would keep them in a shameful Slavery, excessively detrimental to the Publick, and to the Prince, who can never be informed of the Faults of his Ministers, if the People are debarred the Freedom of Speech, and the Right of carrying their Complaints to the Foot of the Throne.

It is beyond all question as much the Interests of Sovereigns, as of their Subjects, not to allow their Ministers too extensive a Power, or not to inquire into their Conduct. Because it comes frequently to pass,

pass, that they themselves suffer for the Blunders of those they trust. How happy would it have been for *Henry III.* (of *France*) if any Courtier of his had been sincere enough to have shewn him the Danger into which he ran headlong, by his blind Attachment, his wrong-placed Affection, and his unworthy Tenderneſs for his Minions? But such is the Fate of Princes! they need Counsel more than other Men, yet no-body dares give it them. An unlucky Experience hath confirmed most People's Opinion, that the Lot of such as venture to disabuse Kings, is very unfortunate. If at first such an Information is favourably received from a faithful Subject, yet it often happens the Minister finds a Way to justify himself, and his Justification induces of course the other's Destruction. Sometimes again the Minister hath no need of Excuses, his Master's Confidence is an impregnable Intrenchment; which, whoever attempts to force, is sure to perish. Heroes and great Princes are liable to Prejudices, as well as other Men. It has so happened, that great Monarchs have fancied their Glory some way interested in supporting those they had made choice of, though they knew they were unfit for the Posts they filled; of which *Chamillard* and others are recent Examples.

Since then it is so dangerous, that it can scarce be expected a private Person about a Court should venture to tell important Truths to a Sovereign, true Policy requires that the People should be permitted to bring their Complaints, whatever they are, against Ministers, directly to the Throne. Otherwise all Ministers must pass for infallible with their Masters; since their Faults could neither be disclosed by particular Persons, nor the People in a Body. It is therefore impossible to remove this
Mischief,

Mischief, so destructive to King and People, but by allowing the World to speak freely of the Virtues and Vices of Great Men, and absolutely suppressing what the *French* call *Lettres-de-cachet*, whereby a Minister hath any Man at his Mercy with whom he is offended ; and this, whether he has done any thing amiss or not.

In this Point, dear *Isaac*, the *English* are perfectly right. There is no Justice done, if any Man is brought to Punishment otherwise than by open Trial, and according to the known Laws of the State. When once (under whatever Pretence) we vary from this plain Rule, we leave ourselves none ; and it cannot but happen, that the Innocent will frequently suffer, either through the Calumnies of their private Enemies, or the Resentments of the Great. Behold an Instance as conclusive as extraordinary !

In 1723, Father *Fouquet*, a Jesuit, returned into *France*, from *China*, where he had resided twenty-five Years, and was so unlucky as to have some Disputes with his Brethren of a religious Nature. He had taught some *Chineze* Doctrines not altogether consistent with the Rules of the Society, of which Memorials were carefully transmitted into *Europe*. Two Persons of Learning, who were Natives of *China**, came over with him. The one died on board the Ship, the other, who came safe to *Paris*, was to go to *Rome*, in order to give Evidence in relation to the Conduct of the Fathers in that Part of the World from which he came. Father *Fouquet*, and his Companion, lodged in the Street of *St. Anthony*, and as secret as they kept their Intentions, the Jesuits guessed at them, resolved to traverse them, and to be revenged. Father *Fouquet*,

* A Man of Letters among the *Chineze*, is a Person devoted to Study, as other Men to Trades.

on his side, penetrated their Design, and without losing a Moment's Time, took Post one Night for Rome, together with his *Chinese* Man of Letters. They followed with the utmost Expedition, and came up unfortunately with the latter. As the unlucky Stranger spoke not a Word of *French*, the Fathers applied themselves to Cardinal *Du Bois*, to whom at that Time they were necessary, and informing him that they had a young Man amongst them who was become crazy, desired Leave to shut him up. The Cardinal, on this slight Information, granted on the Spot what he was always too liberal in granting, a *Lettre-de-cachet*. The Lieutenant de Police who was charged with the Execution of this Order, when he came to seize the Lunatick, found a young Man, who complimented him in the *Chinese* Way, who seemed to sing rather than speak, and looked as in amaze. He expressed his Concern at his Condition, but sent him however to *Charenton*, where he was regularly whipped twice a-day, as the *Abbé des Fontaines* was since at *Biffêtre* *. The poor *Chinese*, understanding nothing of the matter, took all this for the Custom of *France*; and though he had been but two Days at *Paris*, was heartily sick of their Behaviour. In this manner he passed three Years on Bread and Water amongst the Reverend Father *Floggers*, and the poor distracted Creatures who were *flogged*, without ever comprehending there were any Third sort of People in *France*, but supposing it the sole Employment of one Part of the Nation, to make the other dance to the Whip. At the End of that Space of Time there happened a Change in the Ministry, and a new Lieutenant de Police was appointed: He began his

* This *Anecdote* is cleared up in the First Part of *Secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters*,

Office with a Review of the Prisons belonging thereto, and visited that of the mad Folks at *Charenton* amongst the rest. After he had examined all who were produced, he asked if there were none yet to see? They answered, but one, and that he was a poor Creature who spoke a Language no-body understood. A Reverend Jesuit who accompanied this Magistrate, assured him it was a kind of Madness peculiar to this Man not to answer in *French*, and advised him not to call for him, because it would be to no purpose. The Lieutenant did not relish this Advice; and so the young Man was brought out. He presently fell on his Knees to that Magistrate, who caused several Persons to speak to him in *Spanish, Italian, Latin, Greek, and English*, in vain, he only repeated the same Word, *Kanton, Kanton*. The Father piously affirmed he was possessed; but the Lieutenant recollecting there was such a Place in *China*, sent for an Interpreter, who understood *Chinese*, and then the Story came out. The Magistrate knew not what to do, and for once a Jesuit knew not what to say. The Duke of *Bourbon*, who was then at the Head of Affairs, being acquainted with the Thing, took care to have the *Chinese* cloathed and provided for, till an Opportunity offered of sending him home to *China*; whence, it is generally thought, few Men of Letters will for the future venture in the Company of Jesuits to make the Tour of *Rome*.

See, dear *Isaac*, how terribly these *Lettres-de-cachet* may be abused! How many Wretches may yet labour under this Tyranny, so inconsistent with all the Rules of Justice and Equity? If a Prelate finds himself at a loss how to deal with one of his Clergy, he has nothing more to do than to inform against him as a *Jansenist*; a *Lettre-de-cachet* comes instantly forth, and he is disposed of for ever. A Man so
exiled,

exiled, is so far from having it in his power to do himself Justice, by explaining his Conduct, that, generally speaking, he is prohibited all Correspondence, and sent to reside in the midst of his Enemies ; who set their Wits to work, by well-invented Stories, to keep up, and even to augment the Prejudice taken against an innocent Person. How many People within this last Age have been arrested, and lain long in loathsome Prisons, on ill-grounded Suspicions, and false Accusations ? What dreadful Abuses have there been of *Lettres-de-cachet* ? And how many still subsist ? To such a Height at length this Evil came, that private People counterfeited these Letters, and a Criminal was hanged with this Inscription in large Characters on his Breast, A FORGER OF LETTRES-DE-CACHET.

It is in vain, my Friend, that in order to justify this Practice of punishing without Trial, the absolute Power of Princes, and the Necessity of securing some sort of People is alledged. Both these Objections are trivial. Princes ought for their own Interests to accustom the People to see all Things done according to Law. Besides, if they are Lords, they are, at least they ought to be, Fathers also to their Subjects ; and Equity in this Case forbids that they should suffer the Weaker to be the Victims of the more Powerful ; or that any one Man should have such Authority, as to injure others with Impunity.

If there could be any Security had, that succeeding Ministers in *France* would resemble the present, the Prince might, without Fear, intrust them with the Management of his Power without Reserve. He might be assured that it would be exercised so as to make the People happy ; and they, on the other hand, would be so far from fearing any Digressions from the ordinary Rules of Justice, that they would apprehend *Lettres-de-cachet* Acts of Lenity, serving
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to withdraw People from the too great Severities of the Law. But for one Cardinal *Fleury*, there are thirty Cardinals *Du Bois*. Is it then at all just, that the People should be exposed to the Caprice of a Man who abuses the Power of his Sovereign; or that the Lives and Liberties of Subjects should depend on the Credit their Enemies have with a Prime Minister?

The principal Care of Kings ought to be rendering their Subjects exact Justice; and thereby preventing the Small from standing in Fear of the Great. It is therefore absolutely necessary, that every Man should have an Opportunity of defending himself in a legal Way before he is condemned; and that Judgment should be pronounced by Persons absolutely impartial and unbiassed. Observe one thing, my Friend, that the Minister is commonly, if not always, an Adversary to those who suffer by these *Lettres-de-cachet*: Does not Equity then require that there should be some Judge between a private Person and his avowed Adversary? What would be said of a Court of Justice, where, on the Attorney-General's winding up his Harangue against the Criminals, they were hanged up without more ado? Would not all the World blame such a shameful Dependency on the Opinion of one Man? And what, in this Capacity of granting Warrants, is a Minister more than a Peace-Officer? It is true, those who offend against the Laws ought to be punished; but then they ought also to be punished according as the Law directs.

The fatal Effects which follow wherever there are evil Ministers, the Bloodshed and Murders they occasion, the Proscriptions which they are but too ready to attempt on very slight Provocations, are but too strong Motives to induce Sovereigns to act cautiously in the Powers they indulge them, and
not

not to suffer them to act but according to the Rules which Justice prescribes. It is not easy to say whether Princes or private Men are most concerned to see Justice administered steadily, according to the established Rules, and with the utmost Solemnity. If the People have just Cause to tremble at the despotick Power of absolute Ministers, their Masters have no less Cause to be alarmed, if they consider their desperate Effects. If they could but know sometimes how much they stand indebted to such as oppose their Ministers, and those whom they intrust with their Affairs, far from allowing them to be oppressed, they would hear and make use of their Counsels.

As to the rest, dear *Isaac*, I am sensible enough, that let a Minister be ever so able, there will be uneasy and malicious Men, who will oppose, thwart, and misrepresent his Actions, however wise, however useful. It is not such sort of Folks I would have Kings regard, who are in truth but bad Subjects, as well as indifferent Men. When I speak of Princes listening to private Informations, I suppose them always to come from Persons of known Probity, and remarkably well affected. It would be ridiculous indeed to expect a Monarch should listen to the Clamour of a few seditious People; that would be an Evil not much inferior to the former, since it is certain the greatest and the best cannot vanquish Envy.

Cardinal *Fleury* in all probability will one Day be more respected by Posterity than Cardinal *Richelieu*; at least, I am persuaded, that all Philosophick Judges of Mankind will prefer him to all the Ministers that have been in *France*. But this however does not hinder some from being blind enough, or Knaves enough, not to acknowledge his Virtues.

Sir *Robert Walpole*, who is the Minister here, is a Man of a vast penetrating and sublime Genius, and is no less solicitous for the Good of his Country, than attentive to whatever concerns the Glory of his Master : He supports, with wonderful Capacity and consummate Prudence, the whole Weight of publick Affairs : He has carried Commerce and Credit to the highest Pitch. However, Multitudes declaim against him. He has indeed more Enemies than the *French* Minister. In spite, however, of their impotent Clamour, not only the most reasonable People among the *English*, but all *Europe* in general, do Justice to his Capacity, and applaud his Merit. It is very possible his Enemies would be more moderate, if his Qualifications were less conspicuous. I am thinking, *Isaac*, while I write, that if by any Accident this Letter had fallen into the Hands of an *English* Mal-content, he would not fail to assure you these Praises were bestowed for certain Reasons which he would have the Charity to guess at. Nor would he ever admit, that I, though a *Jew*, a Stranger in *England*, and unknown at Court, would commend a Person merely because I thought him commendable.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, live happy and content, and may the God of our Fathers cover thee with Prosperities.

London.

LETTER



L E T T E R CXLVIII.

JACOB BRITO, to AARON MONCECA.

BAD Weather and contrary Winds, dear *Monceca*, have hindered my embarking. I wait with great Impatience the happy Moment when I shall quit this Country. In spite of my Disguise, notwithstanding all the Precautions I take, I am under mortal Inquietudes. I am terrified when I consider the Avarice of the Monks, and I perfectly tremble, when I call to mind their excessive Power in this Place. Yet, excessive as it is, it is much less so than ever it was in Times past; judge then to what a Length it was once carried, and with what Insolence and Tyranny they abused it.

There has happened here within these few Days an Adventure very mortifying for the Priests. The Goaler and his Archers, who have the Custody of the Prison of the Officiality, committed all sorts of Crimes: They robbed, beat, abused the Prisoners at their pleasure, and gave all the Liberty they could desire, to some who had it in their Power to pay for it; so that the most guilty were favoured most. The Corregidor or Chief Magistrate of the City being informed of these Irregularities, caused the Goaler and some of his Mirmidons to be apprehended and conducted to the publick Prisons. Upon this the Patriarch took fire, as supposing himself bound at all Events to support these Rascals, because they depended on his Jurisdiction. He therefore excommunicated the

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Corregidor immediately, as guilty of a great and notorious Crime. That Magistrate being extremely sensible of this Affront, appealed to the King, informed him of the injurious Treatment he had received, and met with the Redress he expected. The King easily apprehended that the Insult offered to this Magistrate reflected on the Crown, and that his Majesty's Authority was wounded by this Act of Presumption in the Patriarch. In fine, he was compelled to recall his Excommunication, and even to write a very polite Epistle to the Corregidor, beseeching him to excuse the Rashness he had shewn in endeavouring to exclude him from the Communion of the Faithful.

This just and commendable Action of the King's, which in any other Country would pass for an ordinary Occurrence, it belonging to the Royal Authority to do Justice in all Cases to its Subjects, is looked on here at *Lisbon* as a very bold Thing, and worthy of the most heroick Courage. The *French* could not make more to do about the Pyramid which *Lewis XIV.* caused to be erected in the midst of *Rome*, than the wisest of the *Portuguese* do about this Action, so glorious for the King, so equitable for the Magistrates, and so mortifying to the Ecclesiasticks. This will however appear the less extraordinary, if you consider the Difference between the Characters of the *French* and *Portuguese*: You will then easily acknowledge that it was not more difficult for the Monarch of *France* to humble the Pope, than for the King of *Portugal* to check the Pride of the Patriarch, who is revered as a kind of Divinity by seven Eights of his Subjects.

Whenever at *Paris* the Sovereign is inclined to act against the *Roman Pontiff*, all things favour his Design. The Parliament sees its mortal Enemy

humbled with Pleasure. Many Ecclesiasticks bless the Hand which protects the Rights of the *Gallican* Church. The People are thankful for the Preservation of their Liberties. And as for the Great, those everlasting Slaves of the Throne, ready to turn *Turks* if the King put on a Turban, they go to bed *Molinists* and rise *Jansenists*, as their Interests direct them. Their Concern for their Fortunes regulates their Faith. If Circumcision was the only Road to Preferment, how many Brethren, dear *Monceca*, should we have at Court?

People in *Portugal* think in quite another Way. The Priests, the Monks, and the Inquisitors, are all concerned in supporting the Authority of their Chief; any Attempt on him rouses them all. A prodigious Croud of bigotted Laicks, instead of opposing the Invasions of the Ecclesiasticks, respectfully kiss the Cords with which they are bound. The People in general, grossly superstitious, never distinguish between the Interests of Priests and that of Religion. Blind alike in Judgment and in Conduct, to what Excess may they not be carried when influenced by the Authors of their Enthusiasm? There remains therefore to support the King in any such Design of moderating the Power of the Clergy, only such as in spite of national Delusion have the Courage to make use of their Reason. Amongst these we may generally reckon the Men of Quality whom a good Education and Conversation with the World hath qualified to see farther than others into the Frauds of Priests, the Avarice of Churchmen, and the Difference between the Interest of Religion and that of the Clergy. But however considerable this Success may be, it is not to be compared with the Facility the King of *France* meets with in the Prosecution of the like Design. There is therefore as high a Spirit, and
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as great a Degree of Courage necessary to do small Things at *Lisbon*, as to perform great and celebrated Exploits at *Paris*.

The reigning King of *Portugal* has had several Struggles with the Court of *Rome*. He has indeed done what none of his Predecessors durst attempt. And by his Firmness he has always hindered them from carrying their Point. Happily for himself and his Kingdom, he is always ready to hear the Advice of true Patriots, and which is more, to follow when he has heard it.

The Misfortunes which Don *Sebastian* drew upon himself, by blindly and imprudently following the Advices of Monks, ought to deter all future Kings of *Portugal* from such a Proceeding. That unfortunate Monarch ruined himself by yielding to the Persuasions of some Jesuits he had about him, who engaged him to give the *Moors* Battle, though their Army was three times as strong as his own. These Priests flattered him with the Hopes of miraculous Assistance. But alas this failed! and that imprudent and unhappy Prince paid with his Life for his Weakness and Credulity; a just indeed, but sure a severe Chastisement for his Facility in suffering himself to be directed by Monks in Things so remote from their Profession, as is whatever relates to Arms.

The Fate of Don *Sebastian* was so much the more unhappy, since many have inclined to think that the Jesuits gave him this Advice on purpose to destroy him. Though this is a Thing by no means certain, yet some have ventured to adopt it as an indubitable Truth. Some there are, says *Brantome**, who assure us, that the Jesuits did and said all with good Intention: Others again suppose they were seduced and corrupted by the King of Spain, to push

* *Dames Galantes*, Tom. ii. p. 88.

this unfortunate young Prince, too full of Courage and of Fire, on his Fate, that the Spanish Monarch might the more easily seize what it is certain he afterwards did seize.

If, dear *Monceca*, you should inquire what my Judgment is in respect to this Dispute, I must freely own that it is a Doubt with me which Opinion has the greatest Appearance of Truth. It may be alledged, that this ought to be added to the long List of imaginary Crimes which the Enemies of the Jesuits have placed to their Account, as no doubt that such a List there is: But then it may be on the other hand suggested, that it is by no means improbable that the Jesuits, so much at that Time devoted to the King of *Spain*, should take this Step, in order to his acquiring Dominions he had already swallowed in Imagination, since in that Case, they only acted in reality in *Portugal*, what most zealously, as well as basely, they endeavoured to bring to pass in *France* in the Times of the League.

Don Sebastian is not the sole Monarch who has fallen through too great Confidence in Priests. *Louis* King of *Hungary* was slain in a Battle against the *Turks*, which Engagement was owing to the obstinate Persuasions of a Cardinal in whom he had too great Trust. A *French* King of the same Name, after he had, at the Sollicitation of the Clergy, made many Wars, as bloody and without Use to his Kingdom, as cruel and unjust with respect to his unhappy Subjects, went at last to fall amidst the Ruins of *Carthage*, where perished with him, at least, one half of a gallant Army, which he had transported from *France* into *Africk*.

One of the greatest Mischiefs which, in my Opinion, dear *Monceca*, can befall a Sovereign, is his paying any sort of Attention to a Set of People, who, void of all Knowledge in the Affairs of the World,

World, are full of a wild as well as false Zeal for Religion; which induces them to approve and execute, as far as they can, the most extravagant Designs. A Man who has Capacity enough to direct thirty *Devotees*, may and must want the Talents necessary to govern a Kingdom. States are not regulated as Convents are, nor must we expect from Subjects what Superiors look for from their Monks. Yet how often have we seen Princes shrinking into the despicable Character of Slaves to their Confessors, and learning at the Feet of their Clergy what ought to be the Fate of their People, till they became themselves the mere Organs of a Monk or Priest? Among the Protestants, where the Clergy pretend to keep their Institution and to stick to their Duty, there are too many for directing their Masters. What amazing Alterations in the Affairs of *England*, nay, and of the Affairs of the High Allies, were produced by the political Sermons of one *Saccheverel*? Elsewhere have we not seen a certain Preacher, tolerably bright for a *Norman*, giving himself the Airs of a Statesman, and treating cavalierly enough the evangelick Ministry? In a word, is it not generally remarked, that every where these People are but too well heard?

Happy is the Prince who knows how to make a right Choice of those he honours with his Confidence. It is on that Choice his Glory and his Peace depend. How many Sovereigns stand distinguished to Posterity, who were perhaps but Men of moderate Parts, and would have appeared so, but for their Ministers of State; The Epithet of *Great*, so liberally bestowed on Princes, would in most Cases, if narrowly scanned, belong rather to their Ministers. Unassisted by *Agrippa* and *Mecenas*, where should we have placed *Augustus*? The History of *Louis XIII.* what is it but the shining Acts of

Richelieu? Louis XIV. was indeed a great King; but the *Condés*, the *Turennes*, as well as the *Luxois* and *Colberts*, had no small Share in acquiring the Glories of his Reign. The Monarch now reigning in *France* hath a thousand and a thousand Virtues, worthy the Esteem of remote Posterity. He possesses, above all, that Sweetness, that Beneficence, that Wisdom and Piety, which rendered *Titus* the Master of the Hearts of Mankind. These Qualifications are never the less his, on account of the Obligations he owes to that wise Minister he has chosen to direct his Councils. If *Burrhus* and *Serena* had not been succeeded by *Narcissus*, *Nero* had been always virtuous. It was the Minions of *Henry III.* misled and ruined that unhappy Prince.

In all Situations of Life, evil Counsellors and wicked Acquaintance are dangerous; but they are still more so to Princes: A private Man will find a thousand Persons ready to open his Eyes, by reproaching him with the wrong Steps into which bad Advice drew him; whereas Courtiers approve and applaud whatever the Prince does, be it ever so bad; so that he has no Resource but to the Advice of some faithful Friend, to whom he accords the Liberty of speaking freely. There are but few Princes wise enough to act thus; which is the Reason why there are few Princes who escape suffering by a contrary Conduct; and which is still worse, all their Faults recur on a Multitude of innocent People, who, though they have no Part in their Offences, suffer for them*. The Errors of Princes are desperate Scourges for their Subjects. The Plague is more merciful to Men than the mad Ambition of Princes to their Neighbours. Famine cannot reduce a Country so low as it may be

* *Quidquid delirant Reges plebsuntur Acturi.* *

brought

brought by the Luxury and Vanity of a Prince criminally avaricious of what is the Produce of his Subjects Labours and Sweat, and prodigal at the same time of his own Revenue to a flattering Courtier, or some faithless Concubine. Rain, Storms, and Inundations, do not mischief People more than a Prince's idle Love, or the Pensions paid to corrupt the Ministers of his Neighbours.

Happy are those Nations where Monarchs study to act like tutelary Deities, by preserving Peace and Abundance to their Subjects, without expecting they should erect Temples in their Turns any where but in their Hearts. Such were the Sentiments of those excellent Monarchs who seem born for the Good of Mankind, and who were anciently, through Gratitude, numbered with the Gods. Those Heroes, who placed all Sense of Greatness in the Good they did to others, what would they have thought if they had seen one King stiled *Great*, for destroying a whole People, and establish his Glory on Rapine and Murder? Another *Magnificent*, for impoverishing his Subjects? And a third *Intrepid*, for his Delight in Slaughter? They would have thought, no doubt, such Titles very ill-bestowed.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, live content and happy, and may the God of our Fathers bless thee with Abundance.

Lisbon.



L E T T E R CXLIX.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraité, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

I Wrote you some Days ago, my dear *Isaac*, my Sentiments as to the Merits of the *English* Tragick Poets: I shall now proceed to give my Judgment on the Comick Writers. They seem to me to exceed those I mentioned first a good deal. I went Yesterday to a Comedy, and I was very well satisfied with the Performance: The Characters were in Nature, the Plot well laid, the Style chaste, &c. and, which was much more important, the Moral was wholesome and just, accompanied with a strong well-turned Vein of Humour. This Piece fell from the Pen of *Congreve*, the best, the wisest, and the most modest of all the *English* Authors in this Way. It had been well if *Wycherley* and *Vanbrugh* had wrote as perfectly: Their Works, to speak the Truth, are full of bold Strokes, and abound with Wit, but they too often bear hard on Modesty, and make the Stage an Engine of Corruption, whereas it ought to be a School of Morals.

It is without Hesitation, my dear Friend, that I place the best Pieces of *Moliere* far above the Productions of *Wycherley*. Besides their surpassing them in Delicacy, they also are exactly suited to the Decency which ought to appear in all publick Spectacles, in order to free them from any Dread
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of those too zealous Doctors ever burning with a strong Inclination to decry them. The best Argument which we can possibly use in favour of the Theatre, is its Usefulness in correcting Manners. The Spectacles or publick Representations of the present Age are certainly adorned with Sentiments which render them very instructive. Few People of Rank are very attentive at Sermons, whereas at the Play-house they mind what is said well enough. I dare say therefore, that *Moliere's* Comedies have done more Service among the Courtiers, than the Sermons of *Bourdaloü* and *Maffillon*. Without teizing you with Examples, do but remember how much Good was done by that single Play of *Prejense ridicules*. But for that excellent Comedy, the *French*, and their Neighbours in Imitation of them, has to this Day affected Manners stiff, impertinent, and unnatural; and had delivered themselves up to an affected way of speaking, which was the Mode for several Years among a Multitude of People. If we drive from the Stage that Modesty which is a necessary Part of Good Manners; if instead of amending the Heart while we amuse the Imagination, we do our utmost to corrupt both, by giving seducing Pictures of Vice, as in the little Entertainments of *Dancour* and other Pieces of the like Stamp; whatever Genius may appear in the Execution, we ought only to be regarded in the same Light with Poisoners, who afford, if they can, an agreeable Flavour to make their mortal Drenches go the more easily down.

Wycherley seems to have collected with the utmost Care the Subjects capable of admitting a criminal Intrigue; those which did not admit one, he forced to that Purpose; and even such Pieces as he purloined from *Moliere* he corrupted from his Taste, That Comedy wherein he has made use of *L'Ecole*

de Femmes, though full of Fire, and by no means deficient in Wit, is yet far short of the Wisdom discoverable in his Model. Instead of *Moliere's* Sagacity in making a future Husband risque his Spouse's Fidelity, and his Caution in avoiding any Expression tending to a Breach of Decorum, *Wycherley* introduces a Man pretending to be a Eunuch, and letting all the World into the Secret of his Incapacity: The Husbands, charmed with such an innocent *Inamorato*, bring their Wives readily into his Company: The false *Origen* having made choice of a Country Lady, obtains of her the last Favours; and if, unluckily for the *English*, their comick Writers were not somewhat nicer than their tragick Poets, they might have in the Conclusion of the Play a very fine Scene on the Stage, at least in their way. There could not certainly be any thing in it more shocking or absurd, than in the introducing in a Tragedy a Husband strangling his Wife with his own Hands; a Thing the *English* see not only without Horror, but with all the Marks of Admiration, in the *Moor of Venice*.

One may venture to affirm, my Friend, that if the Writers of *English* Tragedies are to be justly charged with offending against the Rules of their Art, the comick Authors are not less culpable in respect to their Transgressions against Modesty and Good Manners. The latter are indeed more perfect in their Way. *Wycherley* and *Vanbrugh* come nearer to *Terence* and *Moliere*, than *Dryden* and *Shakespear* to *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, *Corneille* and *Racine*. We sometimes meet in their Works with Strokes bolder and more sparkling than in the *Greek*, *Latin*, or *French* Poets; but the Lustre of these fine Things is more than obscured by long Passages utterly irreconcilable to Decency and Decorum,

Decorum, and wherein the Authors seem lost to Shame.

Congreve's Pieces are the most perfect Comedies the *English* have. He is indeed a worthy Rival of the great *Moliere*, and hath perhaps fewer Faults than he. *Congreve* is exact, lively, prudent; cautious in his Expressions, and who never runs into low ridiculous Pleasantries purely to keep up the Laugh. He is thoroughly acquainted with Mankind, and all his Characters are natural, full of Truth, and exceedingly striking. If the *English* Comedies in general were as good as his, the Theatre at *London* would surpass that of *Paris*; but in the first place, his Plays are but few; and in the next, few of their Authors come near him.

The meanest of the comick Writers in this Country have a Custom pleasant enough: They pillage *Moliere*, they disfigure his best Pieces, and criticise him with the utmost Insolence. That Author is really as ill-treated in *England*, as *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, &c. by the Adversaries of the Ancients. All the Dabblers in *Parnassus* open against him as a common Enemy, and yet do their utmost to make their miserable Pieces go off, by interlarding them with Sentiments stole from him; it is true, they manage these so sorrily, that if one was to form a Judgment of *Moliere* by the Samples they give us, we should condemn that illustrious Writer without Mercy. But what Effect on his Reputation can the Attempts of these Blotters of Paper ever have, or what can a few Authors of miserable damned Farces say to prejudice him? I am assured that *Congreve* has the highest Esteem in the World for *Moliere's* Writings, and no Poet of Eminence among the *English* ever decried his Plays. How is it possible to be so prejudiced, as not to be sensible

of the Delicacy, the Salt, the Good Sense, which reigns in his *Tartuffe*, his *Misanthrope*, his *School of Women*, and his *Learned Ladies*? *Corneille*, and *Racine* never put Pen to Paper against *Sophocles* or *Euripides*: On the contrary, they gave those Authors all the Praises they could bestow. *Boileau* and *Pope* are zealous Advocates for the Honour of *Homer* and *Virgil*; is it not surprizing, that only the *Peraults*, the *Terrassons*, and other second-rate Authors, should form the ridiculous Design of tarnishing the Glory of those ancient Heroes? *Scarron*, *d'Assouci*, and *Marivaux*, who in attempting to travesty *Virgil*, *Ovid*, and *Fenelon*, have rendered themselves ridiculous, are however far less blameable than these People, because they had still high Thoughts of their Originals, though they drew after them miserable Copies.

It seems in the learned World a necessary Consequence of attaining a certain Pitch of Reputation to be attacked by these *Zoilus's*, the Scum and Off-scouring of Letters. I do not know, *Isaac*, whether ever it might enter your Head to consider the Number of bad Books written against the best Authors. There is not one, however eminent, who has escaped Criticism; and which is worse, those who venture to carp at them, do it as if they were every way their Superiors, and were taking to task the Works of *Bonnetcorse* or *Pradon*.

Not to speak of the impertinent *Parallel between the Ancients and Moderns*, in which they have shewn less Care to demonstrate the Equality between the Ages of *Louis XIV.* and *Augustus*, than to injure the Characters of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, how many miserable Criticisms have we seen against the Tragedies of *Corneille*, *Racine*, *Crebillon*, and *Voltaire*? It is true, their Performances are applauded notwithstanding, and these silly Attacks

are forgot; yet it is still true, that such Things were once published, and that there were not wanting Fools who admired them.

Is it not a certain Truth, that a Folio was published against *Bayle's Dictionary*? It is owned that Men of Taste laughed at the Attempt. However, it was approved by some half-lettered Folks; nor was the Contempt of good Judges sufficient to hinder the Sale of this dull Piece among those who buy at random, and whose indigested Collections are not so properly *Bibliothèques* as *Bibliothèques*. You must allow me this Word, in order to express a Place where dead Books are buried.

A certain Monk * was weak enough to publish a Dissertation full of Invectives against the *Characters of la Bruyère*. Some Numsculls had the Patience to read it, and others of their Brethren would still afford it that Honour, if the Translator of *Locke* had not taken the Pains to exhibit the Nakedness of that Criticism to the Publick.

Montaigne, long after his Death, sustained the Spite of the *Jansenists*. Certainly his Works are in as much Esteem as ever, while the Criticism would scarce be remembered if it was not taken notice of in the Preface to the last Editions of that Author's Essays.

Dr. *Stillingfleet* wrote against *Locke*. By Good Luck his Criticism was never translated; so that it was never known to a great Part of *Europe*, otherwise it would without question have had its Admirers.

The Fate of so many excellent Works hath almost induced me to believe it ought to be accounted one of the Marks of a good Book, that it hath been

* A *Cartusian*, who wrote under the *Nome de Guerre* of *Vigneul-Marville*.

criticized. If this was certain, one would allow that the *Journalists* of *Trevoux* have for many Years past done the Labours of the *Jansenists* great Service, as well as to those of Protestants and other Adversaries, by not allowing one of them to be tolerable. In order to be even with them, I have often thought that instead of that foolish insipid Thing called *Novelles Ecclesiastiques*, they ought to set up some kind of literary Journal, and therein tear without Mercy the fine Writings of *Petau*, *Sirmond*, *Bourdauoue*, *de la Rue*, *Daniel*, &c. and cry up the poor Performances of nameless Authors, who with all the Rage of Party abused the Society. But indubitably they have been discouraged from this by the bad Reception given to the *Journal de Trevoux*. They must have perceived that the Publick hath long disregarded what is said of many Books, in that *Adolantist Journal*, and conjectured from thence what Favour would be shewn to a *Jansenist* Collection in the same Taste. They have therefore made it their Choice to bring out a weekly Sheet suited to the Genius of the Many, hoping by these Courses through the open Country to do some Mischief to an Enemy possessed of all the Places of Strength. Happy for them that their Adversaries have also run themselves into Extravagancies, and thereby ruined their Credit, which would otherwise have been much better than that of the *Jansenists*. Infinite Numbers of Persons of Judgment have been disgusted, when on considering the Conduct of both Parties closely, they have been convinced that they are equally animated by Rage and Resentment.

If we speak the Truth, dear *Isaac*, we must confess, that when one reflects coolly on the Transactions in the Republick of Letters, one is provoked to see how little Sincerity appears, and how much Injustice and Partiality is evident in the Criticisms

ticisms and Decisions of the Learned, in regard to the Writings of their Adversaries.

Fare thee well, my dear Friend, live content and happy, and never embarrass thyself with captious or testy People.



LETTER CL.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE greatest Philosophers fall sometimes, dear *Isaac*, into the same Faults and Puerilities with which they reproach their Adversaries. They forget those Principles on which they establish their own Arguments against scholastick Chimæras. They affect to establish such strange Opinions, and to explain such inexplicable Things, that we turn, with Justice, upon themselves their Criticisms on certain Authors whom they have treated with sovereign Contempt.

Observe, my Friend, how *Mallebranche* hath explained himself on the bold and yet ill-founded Decisions of *Aristotle*: Certainly an extraordinary Measure of Faith is necessary in order to credit what *Aristotle* thus advances when he affords only Logical Proofs, and when he explains the Effects of Nature no otherwise than by the confused Notions of Sense, especially when he decides roundly on Questions which seem above human Reach. He therefore tells us, very often as well as peremptorily, that we are to take his Word,

Word, it being a settled Point with this Author, that a Disciple is to believe.*

What think you, my dear *Isaac*, of a Philosopher who condems so expressly, such as advance Opinions which they can neither prove nor explain clearly, and yet decides with an Air of Authority, on the Cause of Evil with respect to Mankind, and explains philosophically the Justice of the Deity with regard to the Damnation of Children, which some *Nazarines* hold inevitable tho' they die in the Cradle, if they have not gone through a certain Ceremony which is equivalent to Circumcision amongst us? If *Mallebranche* had said simply what every Man of Sense ought to say, that he submitted the Lights he derived from Nature to the Dictates of Faith, according to the Notions entertained of such Mysteries by his Church, and had alledged he believed that Children were damned, even who died in their Cradles, because he apprehended it to be so revealed, and therefore received it as an Article of Faith, he would have merited Praise for knowing how to set Bounds to human Curiosity; but instead of this, he has gone further than ever *Aristotle* did, whom he reproaches; and has said more extravagant Things, and attempted to explain more unintelligible Mysteries in four Lines, than the *Greek Philosopher* has discovered in his eight Books of *Physics*.

Behold, my Friend, the pompous and sublime *Galimatias*, by which *Mallebranche* would prove that it is reconcileable to the Divine Justice, to punish an Infant for a Sin in which it had no Part. *A Mother*, says this Philosopher, whose Brain is full of Traces which must have been left by Objects introduced by the Senses, and which she could not efface by reason

* *Mallebranche*, Recherche de la Verité, Livr. ii. page 18.

of the Concupiscence reigning in her, as having not Power over her Body, communicates them to her Child, who, springing from her, is a Sinner, though she herself may be just. The Mother is just, because she actually loves or hath loved God by choice, neither doth Concupiscence render her criminal, though she may have followed its Motions in Sleep. But the Infant she carries, having never loved God by choice, nor ever turned its Heart towards him, it is most evidently in Disorder and Blindness, nor can there be any thing in it but what is worthy of his Wrath.

I do not know whether you observe, that all these sublime Illusions are reducible to this: A Mother brings forth a Son a Sinner, because she communicates to him the Concupiscence, of which she is guilty. She hath however a Power of delivering herself, because she is at liberty to use her Reason and to love the Deity; whereas her Son ought to be damned, as not having the Faculty of reflecting on himself, and the Power of loving God.

Do you not perceive a fine Chain of Reasoning flowing from excellent Principles? I will, for a Moment, suppose myself that *Aristotle*, whom *Mallebranche* has so grievously insulted. Tell me, would I say to him, thou French Metaphysician, who informed you that a Mother could communicate to a Creature incapable of Reflection, concupiscent Desires, which ought to render it miserable? What Proofs have you that it is consistent with God's Justice to punish an Innocent for a Fault committed without its Knowledge, and also through Necessity? Be pleased, if you think it possible, to shew me how an Infant in its Mother's Womb can resist the Impressions it receives from her? If then it is incapable of Resistance, and is obliged to follow the general Laws of Nature, is it not ridiculous to say that it is punished for doing what was necessary for it to do? I would rather chuse to say that a Child
becomes

becomes a Sinner after it is born, by sucking the Milk of a Nurse who is a Sinner, than to ascribe it to the Impression made thereon in its Mother's Womb. The first of these Positions is less repugnant to Good Sense, because a Child may live without sucking, but not without feeling the Motions communicable by his Mother while he remains within her.

You must own, my good Friend, this is a pleasant way of explaining the Source of human Misery. What would the ancient Greek Philosophers say, could they return to Life again, to those French Wits who have dealt with them so sharply, and who are yet for explaining Original Sin, as some Physicians account for the Marks or Blemishes with which Children are born.

The Conclusion drawn by *Mallebranche* is still more absurd than the Principle from which he draws it; after shewing the Manner in which Infants become Criminals, he concludes, that not having the Power of knowing God, and of consequence of repenting and seeing their Faults, it is but just they should be damned.

Is there any thing more extraordinary, than to suppose what is so opposite to any rational Idea of God, that he should punish such Creatures of his as have not only no Power of resisting Sin, or of repenting of it, but which is much worse, have really no use of Reason, and act only by a kind of Instinct? For I cannot apprehend, that even Father *Mallebranche* would assert, that a Child in the Womb ought to be a Doctor of the Sorbonne, and in consequence thereof, know that one who loves not God by a Love of Choice, and whose Heart is not turned towards the Deity, is not in any other State than that of Disorder and Blindness, and in which there is nothing but what merits the Wrath of God. An Infant is ignorant of all this, even many Years after
its

its Birth. How then should it have any such Ideas in its Mother's Womb? If then it has no sort of Notion either of Good or Evil, and its Soul, though of a spiritual Nature, acts as yet but as the Germ in a Plant, is there not a visible Absurdity in saying it is punished on account of the Matter which serves for its Aliment?

When certain *Nazarene* Doctors attempt to give philosophical Reasons in support of this Doctrine, I fancy to myself so many Fools arguing for the cutting down of Orange-Trees, because the Gardener who planted them had done something amiss. A Man of Learning must lay his Account with saying very silly Things, when he will, by the Light of his Reason, endeavour to explain Points of pure Revelation. By it we are directed to believe Mysteries. Let us believe them then without allowing Reason, under pretence of explaining, to render them incredible by making them appear absurd.

It is however certain, that if we embrace this Sentiment, it brings along with it great Difficulties. If one ought, it will be said, to submit blindly to what we are assured has been revealed; there is nothing but may be supported by Revelation. In all Religions, in the Jewish, the Nazarene, the Mohammedan, the most absurd Chimæras are received. How many ridiculous Things do many of the Rabbies, an infinite Number of Christian Divines, and Multitudes of Dervises and other Turkish Enthusiasts, pretend to have been positively revealed? To this I answer, that we ought to examine carefully if a Thing hath been revealed or not. But I say, that this Inquiry finished, and we thoroughly assured that a Thing hath been revealed, there remains no more room for Doubts about it.

When I assert that a Jew should submit his Understanding to Revelation, I do not mean that he should receive and adopt all the Notions of the Rabbies as
so

so many Articles of Faith, if they attempt to impose on him an Error, let him, as soon as he has seriously and thoroughly considered, reject it. But if any Doubts enter his Mind, as to Facts recorded in the Holy Scriptures, the Authenticity of those Books and their Revelation should incline him to humble himself and to receive them implicitly, without seeking by human Reasons to explain divine Mysteries; lest, by sharing the presumptuous Folly of *Malbranche* in such an Undertaking, he should, as he inevitably must, expose himself to those Reproaches which are very justly bestowed on that vain Philosopher.

I return, my dear *Isaac*, to my first Idea. Is it not very surprizing that a great Genius, an Author of the first Class, who sees so clearly the Giddiness of another Writer and his gross Mistakes, as to refute them invincibly, should nevertheless fall immediately after into the same Errors, without perceiving that he acted therein directly opposite to his own Principles, or at least to those on which it became, in his Opinion, a Philosopher to argue? Such a deplorable Blindness is a very sensible Proof of the Weakness of Human Understanding, and of that foolish Prejudice a Man is apt to entertain for whatever comes from himself; he fancies there is nothing hid beyond his Reach, yet he condemns others for having attempted to explain unintelligible Things; but fancies, at the same time, a Power in himself of succeeding even in those Things which he censured others for attempting. Most of our modern Philosophers, and the Metaphysicians especially, have done nothing but added new Mistakes to those which the Ancients left behind them, and for which they insulted them so grossly, as themselves will be, in process of time, by their Successors, who probably will do nothing more than augment the

the Doubts and Uncertainties with which Philosophy is already encumbered.

To me it seems probable, that the outrageous Criticisms of each other's Systems which the Philosophers daily publish, are the just Punishments of their Pride. To this I am the rather led, because I have always observed, that in the same Proportion a Man is vain of his Discoveries, his Enemy contemns them. The Fate of *Aristotle* of late is little better than that of *Cotin* and *Pradon*. The *Cartesians* have carried their Aversion to Excess, they take no Pains to distinguish the good from the bad, but condemn, without distinction, all the Works of the *Greek* Philosopher, though there are abundance of useful Things in them. If the great Tutor of *Alexander* were to revisit the World, he would be surprized to see his Works, which made formerly such a Noise, now valued only by a few Monks. His single Consolation would be, to see the same Fate attend his two great Antagonists, *Descartes* and *Mallebranche*, whose Works grow daily into Discredit. The Prudence, the Sincerity, the Candor, the Penetration of those of *Locke*, have drawn all the wiser Part of the Logicians and Metaphysicians to his Party; on the other hand, those who study Physicks are all become Disciples of *Newton*. And the extraordinary Modesty with which these two Philosophers have delivered their Opinions, will effectually secure them from a like Reverse of Fortune.

Adieu, dear *Isaac*, may the God of our Fathers continue to heap on thee his Blessings.

LETTER



LETTER CLI.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

I HAVE met, dear *Isaac*, here in *England*, with a Cabbalist, whom I first became acquainted with at *Hamburgh*. After complimenting him on his safe Arrival, I intreated him to allow me the Honour of conversing with him some time during his Stay in this City. *I give you my Consent*, said he, *with a great deal of Pleasure to what you desire, and I promise you that I will not conceal from you any of the Mysteries of our Art.* Charmed with so frank an Offer, as well as with the Opportunity of knowing whether there were any thing real in that Science or no, I thanked him in the warmest and tenderest manner Words would permit. *I am willing*, continued he, *to begin this very Day to explain to you the first Principles of Hermetick Philosophy. Let us go take a walk in some proper Place, where we need apprehend no Interruption.* I readily followed my new Master, and took a Seat with him in the Corner of a publick Garden, which is so far from being over-frequented, that it sometimes looks like a Desert.

We were hardly sat down, when the Cabbalist lifted his Eyes to Heaven, kept silence for some Minutes, and seemed to be wrapt in a profound Contemplation. Then coming to himself again, he

he fetched a deep Sigh, asking me if I had never read any Books treating of their Art? I answered him, that I had looked over several, but that I found them so obscure, that they had absolutely deprived me of all Hopes of being able to find out their Sense. At these Words the Cabbalist fetched another deep Sigh. " See, said he, the
 " sad Effects of the Wickedness of Men. The
 " Sages are obliged to veil, and to conceal the
 " Knowledge of the Treasures which they possess
 " even from Men of Worth, who ought to parti-
 " cipate of them, through a Fear that wicked and
 " profane People should make use of their Writ-
 " ings. All the learned Secretaries of Nature
 " have therefore chosen to write so obscurely, as
 " to render it simply impossible to penetrate the
 " Meaning of their Discourses, unless enlightened
 " by the Holy Spirit, or by some Master of the
 " Art. Insomuch that these illustrious Philosophers
 " plainly avow, that they write not for all sorts of
 " Readers, but for the chosen Scholars of the gol-
 " den Doctrine *. *Agmon*, the great *Agmon*, to-
 " wards the End of the *Turb* †, delivers himself
 " thus: *If we had not multiplied the Names of the*

* See the Proem to the Introduction, or School of the transmuting metallick Philosophy, by *David de Platinis Campi*, p. 1.

† The *Turb* is a Collection of all the Visions which they ridiculously ascribe to the ancient Philosophers whom they suppose to have been acquainted with the Art of making Gold, among whom they reckon *Aristotle*, *Socrates*, and *Pythagoras*. In this Book also are contained all the Follies of the *Cabbalists*. The *Turb* is in short the *Talmud* and the *Alcoran* of the Artists, and contains yet more absurd Things than those Collections of extravagant Fables.

" *Art,*

“ *Art, and taken Pains to obscure it, our Scholars*
 “ *had by this time profaned it, and brought it into*
 “ *Contempt. If I, says the illustrious Rasis, was to*
 “ *reveal its Mysteries, there would be no longer any*
 “ *Difference between the Sage and the Simple. The*
 “ *Almighty, as Rasan writes in the same Book,*
 “ *bath obliged the Philosophers not to teach this Art*
 “ *to the Vulgar, lest the World should perish. For*
 “ *this Cause the Philosophers have carefully concealed*
 “ *that precious Medicine; because it enlivens and*
 “ *conserves all Things in an equal Temperament. For*
 “ *if all Men were alike rich, none would obey others,*
 “ *there would be no longer either Rule or Order in*
 “ *the World.”*

“ These Reasons, continued the Cabbalist, are,
 “ as you see, so essential, that the Philosophers are
 “ tied down by them not to write but in this ob-
 “ scure Manner, and so as only to be understood
 “ by such as are initiated in the sacred Mysteries.
 “ But that which is a farther Check, and binds
 “ them to a still closer Silence, is the barbarous
 “ and inhuman Treatment such Men have met
 “ with, as through a fatal Easiness have been in
 “ this respect guilty of some Indiscretion. There
 “ are a Multitude of tragical Histories whence Ex-
 “ amples of this sort might be drawn. The un-
 “ fortunate Hermit who trusted *Braggardin*, died
 “ by the Hand of that Robber. *Richard the Eng-*
 “ *lishman*, who confided his Secret to a King of
 “ that Country, was put to death in the Tower.
 “ You see then, how much the Philosophers are
 “ interested in the Observation of this Rule, of ei-
 “ ther keeping a profound Silence, or speaking in a
 “ Language intelligible only to their Disciples.”

To what End then, said I, do you write Books
 upon your Art, since they are intelligible only to such

at

as have no need of them, because they already know what they contain. You ought, I think, to avoid publishing Books which serve only to make Fools of Men of avaricious Tempers, and to reduce them to an extreme Poverty; the just Chastisement of their not being content with moderate Wealth, sufficient for the Supply of their Necessities.

“ I perceive clearly, said my new Master, that you look upon the Books of our Sciences to be much more unintelligible than they really are. For you must know, that though our Writings are very obscure, yet it is not however impossible, through the Assistance of God, without which Men cannot do any thing, to reach their secret Meaning, and to come at the true Sense of all their Enigmas. It is this that I shall make you clearly apprehend, by giving you the Key of each different Style in which our Philosophers write. But in order to make this Matter the more easy, I will first discover, without Disguise, the fundamental Principle of our Philosophy.

“ When the Eternal Being, continued the Cabalist, created the Universe, he divided the Waters from the Waters. He then separated the purer Part of these into three Portions: Of the first and most perfect Part, he made whatsoever exists above the Firmament; of the second the Firmament itself, the Planets, Stars, and all that is therein; of the third, he composed the four Elements, through which he diffused the Spirit of Life, which ought to be regarded as a fifth Element, the Principle, the Seed, the Ligament, the operating Virtue, by which the whole Universe is kept together. It is this fifth Element, of which the Generality of Men are ignorant, that the true Philosophers call the *Universal Spirit*, *Natural Magick*, the *Quintessence*, the *Elixir*,

“ *Aurum potabile*, the Stone, Mercury, Azoth, Wa-
 “ ter, Fire, Dew, &c. They make use of so
 “ many different Names, the better to cover their
 “ Secrets; but, however, it is also true, that each
 “ of these different Denominations suits perfectly
 “ well the Thing intended thereby. When they
 “ call this the *Quintessence*, it is because it is the
 “ Result of the Assemblage of the *Four Elements*.
 “ When they ascribe to it the Name of the *Elixir*,
 “ it is on account of its admirable Properties in
 “ preserving Life, and freeing Men from all Dis-
 “ eases. The Title of *Aurum potabile* is given it,
 “ because it is excellent as Gold. It must also be
 “ observed, that these Philosophers do not contra-
 “ dict themselves in asserting that their Matter is
 “ *vegetable, animal, and mineral*. For as the uni-
 “ versal Spirit or fifth Element could not subsist
 “ without some sort of Body; and as, on the other
 “ hand, no Body can subsist without Life, it is
 “ diffused through all the different Elements; so
 “ that the vegetable, the animal, the mineral Fa-
 “ culty, are each of them properly ascribed thereto.
 “ All the Secret of the Art then consists in this,
 “ the Capacity of finding the *vital Spirit*, and put-
 “ ting it into a Condition to act freely on any Bo-
 “ dy. For abounding in Heat, it clears, purifies,
 “ and in the end certainly performs the grand O-
 “ peration.

“ The wise Philosophers who have written on
 “ the Method of extracting, or of drawing out of
 “ other Elements this prolifick and vivifying Seed,
 “ have employed different Methods of Explication,
 “ alike dark and obscure, and these are called *the*
 “ *Styles*. *Merlin* made use of the *allegorick*, King
 “ *Arthur* of the *parabolick*, the great *Hermes* of
 “ *problematick*, *Arfileus* of the *typical*, *Balgus* and
 “ the *Cosmopolite* of the *enigmatick*. With respect
 “ to

“ to these different Methods, or, as we phrase it,
 “ the Interpretation of the Styles, the Key of the
 “ two first will suffice to render the Knowledge of
 “ the rest easy.

“ *Merlin*, speaking in the allegorick Style, pro-
 “ ceeds thus: *A King having drank of the Water*
 “ *could not mount his Horse, i. e. by a proper Mix-*
 “ *ture of Water and Earth, the Matter is rendered*
 “ *fluid.* He then proceeds; *The King having taken*
 “ *a Medicine, composed of Sal Armoniack and Nitre,*
 “ *was found dead.* By which he would insinuate,
 “ *that by the Means of the specifick Projection, or of*
 “ *the Spirit extracted from the Elements, the liquid*
 “ *Matter was fixed and converted into Gold, the Fire*
 “ *of the Furnace having consumed all the Humidity.*

“ The enigmatical Style, which is that made use
 “ of by *Balgus* and the *Cosmopolite*, is as obscure as
 “ the allegorick, for those who are unacquainted
 “ with this *fifth* Element; this *Salt* or this *Spirit*,
 “ which I have told you is the true Powder of Pro-
 “ jection. For instance; *Look, say they, upon an*
 “ *Infant that sucks, and be not troubled, for there*
 “ *lies the Secret of the Art.* These Words signify,
 “ *That we must purify the active and the passive*
 “ *Matter, the Sulphur and the Mercury, by a Fire*
 “ *that must be managed with Care, and which we*
 “ *must augment in the same manner as we encrease*
 “ *the Portions of Aliment given to Children as they*
 “ *attain to riper Years.*

“ You now see, continued the Cabbalist, that
 “ the Writings of the Sages are not absolutely unin-
 “ telligible to such as are initiated in the Mysteries
 “ of which they treat, and that they have Reason
 “ to take the Precautions they do for the better
 “ concealing their Secrets from the Profane.”

I shall readily, returned I, admit of the Obscurity
for which your Philosophers contend, because they say

it is so necessary to them. But I have still a great Doubt upon me; I can hardly bring myself to believe that any of them have carried Matters so far, as actually to extract this vivifying Salt from the other Elements. I think also that they have never made Gold, notwithstanding their boasting of that Art. You, for Example, who are one of their most famous Disciples, do you know the Secret of extracting this Spirit of Life; this Powder of Projection, which is absolutely necessary to the Work of Transmutation?

“ Such, replied the Cabbalist, as are acquainted
 “ with the Manner of working, are yet at a great
 “ Distance from the Completion of the great Work.
 “ One finds not in a whole Age above one or two
 “ Persons fortunate enough to direct their Fire with
 “ that Justice as to arrive at the great End of the
 “ Art. The smallest Excess or Deficiency in Heat
 “ is sufficient to defeat the Labour of twenty or of
 “ thirty Years; and what Knowledge soever a Man
 “ has, it is God alone, who can prevent certain
 “ Accidents which are too frequent for all human
 “ Precautions; this is the Reason why among so
 “ many of the Sages, so few have fully succeeded *.

“ I must

* The Chymists compare the Difficulties attending the Search of the Philosopher's Stone, to those encountered by Jason, in his looking for the Golden Fleece. They pretend, that it is not till after a long and laboured Pursuit, that we arrive at length at the great, the important Secret. As also, that such as are unable to bear Fatigue and Disappointments, ought to forbear the Search of the Philosophick Transmutation. This Caution is of mighty Use in conducting to their utter Ruin such as seek to make Gold. *Alii sunt paululum d. ciores, humaniores, & ratione insaniunt, qui arbitrantur lapidem ita à Naturâ effectum, ut absque omni labore, & sine præparatione, metallis violenter paucis Temporis minutis, alias*
 &

“ I must even acknowledge to you, that though I
 “ have revealed the most hidden Mysteries of the
 “ Art, I would by no means advise you to apply
 “ yourself to it; nay, if I had not long ago em-
 “ braced, I should not at this Day have chosen it
 “ preferable to many other Occupations. I must
 “ tell you, that I have already consumed very
 “ considerable Sums; but though I have not reached
 “ the Art of making Gold, I have discovered many
 “ other Secrets that have recompensed my Pains,
 “ and encouraged me to pursue my Enterprize.”

It would then, replied I, be in vain for me to persuade you to quit so deceitful a Study. I will not then offer to tell you what you must many Times in your cooler Moments have told yourself. But I shall at all Times be grateful for your Complaisance towards me, and shall hear with Pleasure whatever you shall think fit further to communicate of your Secrets. With these Words I took leave of the Chymist, who repeated

Et novas formas induere valeat. Hoc est, si quis lapidem habeat, ipsum posse statim quævis metalla transformare: quæ tamen cerdonica indoctrinæ imperitissimi Vulgi opinio, re ipsa, falsa, vana Et nullis fundamentis, repugnat evidentissimis Philosophorum Argumentis Et Rationibus. Postea, Deorum Filii, exemplo Jasonis docent, quanti sit laboris ante quàm tantum rem liceat auferre. Oportet prudentissimis consiliariis, sive deliberationibus Et consiliis exquisitis rem aggredi, diu navigare, ac ubi tandem ex Mari perveneris in Terram, materiam solidam constantem Et fixam, arte vera tanquam Medea, solis filii Terram aëripedibus Tauris adamanteo jugo junctis, qui flammæ ex naribus spirant, arare, ac in eam Terram ex Galea Draconis dentes seminare ex quibus, Hostes natq; miris armis instructos interficere, Lapide in medio projecto, de quo certabunt inter se, Draconi truculentissimo inducere somnum, quibus cunctis summo labore Et diligentia peractis, patet Aditus in Martis Templum ad aureum vellus. Epistola ad Fuggeros, p. 51 & 52.

to me his Promise of communicating whatsoever he found curious.

How great soever, my dear *Isaac*, the Folly may be of the Cabbalists, and Lovers of sublime Chymistry, it must however be acknowledged, that the World is much indebted to them for a multitude of Discoveries in experimental Physicks. For in searching their fifth Element, and imaginary Powder of Projection, they have discovered the Methods by which vitriolick and metallick Fluids coagulate in the Entrails of the Earth, and form their Minerals, Metals, and Stones, according to the different Kinds of Matter on which they act. Chymistry has given us also a sensible Idea by its Fermentations and Sublimations of the Vegetation of Plants, and the Growth of Animals. From its Distillations we learn how the Sun, after having rarified the Waters of the Sea, or of Rivers, draws them into the Air, where they form Clouds, and again fall down in Rain or Dew. So many Discoveries, for which we are indebted to the Studies of the Chymists, ought to endear to true Philosophers the vain Researches of the Cabbalists and pretended Sages, of whose Extravagance and Folly they make such wise and profitable Uses.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live happy and content, and take care not to embarrass yourself by searching after the Philosopher's Stone.

London.

LETTER



L E T T E R CLII.

AARON MONCECA, *to* ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THERE is no Nation, dear *Isaac*, exempt from some false Step or other; the *French* blame the *English* for having unjustly burnt *Joan of Arc*, commonly called the *Maid of Orleans*, for no other Crime than that she had faithfully served her Prince and Country. They say farther, to palliate this Injustice done to the illustrious *French* Woman, they have had Recourse to Fraud and Falshood, and most ridiculously charged her with Conjuring and Witchcraft.

The *English* agree at this Day, that their Ancestors were in the wrong to act so contrary to the Laws of Equity and of War; they assert, that the *Maid of Orleans*, whom the *French* Historians, generally speaking, treat as a Saint, was in reality no more than a bold enterprizing, high-spirited Woman, of whom the Courtiers of *Charles VII.* made use to re-establish the Affairs of the Kingdom, and to dispel that Panick with which the Soldiers had been seized.

This Diversity of Opinions in the *French* and *English* Historians begat in me a Curiosity of going to the Bottom of this History, and of bringing the Truth to light, notwithstanding the Mists with which it is covered. *Pasquier*, an Author by no means to be suspected of favouring Superstition, hath

given us an exact Detail of the Proceſs againſt *Joan de Arc*, whom he looks upon as a Saint, and whoſe Memory he has warmly defended. If on examining the Proofs which he brings in order to demonſtrate the pretended Revelation made to this *Joan*, their Falſity can be clearly made appear, one may ſafely affirm, that Heaven had nothing to do, ſtrictly to ſay, with the Tranſactions of that Woman; and one may allow, that the *English* at this Day are in the right, in alledging ſhe was an Inſtrument made uſe of by the Counſellors and Generals of *Charles VII.* Let me beſeech you, my Friend, to reflect attentively on the Reaſons alledged by *Pafquier*, as thoſe which led him to believe the *Maid of Orleans* a Saint, and I perſuade myſelf that you will quickly ſee through them.

“ It is a great Pity, ſays my Author*, never
 “ did any Perſon ſuccour *France* ſo opportunely and
 “ ſo happily as this Maid, and never was the Me-
 “ mory of any Woman ſo torn and diſhonoured as
 “ hers has been. The *English* looked upon her as
 “ a Heretick and a Witch, in which Light they
 “ burnt her. Some of our Writers have ſuggeſted,
 “ that ſhe was an artful Woman, ſuch a one as
 “ *Numa Pompilius* paſſed upon the *Romans* for a
 “ Nymph, in order to render himſelf more reſpected
 “ by the People; and this is the Opinion of *Langy*.
 “ in the third Book and third Chapter of his *Mili-
 “ tary Diſcipline*. To this others have added, that
 “ the *French* Lords engaged this Wench to act as
 “ ſhe did, and to feign that ſhe was ſent by God in
 “ order to ſuccour the Kingdom; they alſo affirm,
 “ that at *Chinon*, where ſhe diſtinguiſhed King
 “ *Charles* amidſt the Croud that attended him, ſhe
 “ was aſſiſted by a certain Signal given her by her

* *Reſcherches de Paſquier*, livr. vi. chap. 5.

“ Conſe-

“ Confederates. Nay, some have been so base and
 “ impudent as to suggest that one Captain *Baudri-*
 “ *court* debauched her, and finding her to have a
 “ very sharp Wit, put her upon this Action.”

You must observe, *Isaac*, that even in the Time
 this Transaction happened, the Truth of her Divine
 Mission was very much doubted, and that this Opin-
 ion spread and prevailed by degrees. In the Age
 wherein *Pasquier* wrote, most People gave no sort
 of Credit to the Holiness of *Joan de Arc*, or to her
 Wisdom; but, on the contrary, were persuaded that
 all her Pretences to Inspiration were founded in the
 Secrets revealed to her by *Baudricourt*.

As to the Manners of this young Woman, I rea-
 dily agree with *Pasquier*, that they were above Re-
 proach. The Proof he has given us hath the Ap-
 pearance of Truth. “ Her Chastity she maintained,
 “ said he, to her Death, even in the midst of the
 “ Troops.” It is certain that the *English*, who
 sought by a thousand Methods to defame her, in
 order to cover that Severity with which they pro-
 ceeded against her, would not have failed to men-
 tion her Incontinence, if any Testimony thereof had
 been in their Power, and yet there is nothing of
 this sort in her Process. But what of all this? It
 may prove the Chastity indeed, but it cannot prove
 the Sanctity of *Joan de Arc*. In admitting that *Bau-*
dricourt did not debauch her, it no way follows that
 she had a divine Revelation; I do not think that
 being a Maid, includes the Character of a Prophetess
 and Deliverer of Nations. I shall agree with the
French Historians, that *Joan of Arc* never had a
 Bastard; but then I concur with the *English* Au-
 thors, in asserting that her pretended Mission was a
 downright Imposture. In order to be convinced of
 this, we need only hear what *Pasquier* says, who
 would fain have her canonized: “ I shall, says he,

M 5 “ run

“ run over the principal Articles on which *Joan of Arc* was interrogated. Being asked as to her Name, she said, That in her own Country she was called *Jeannette*, but since she lived in *France* she hath been called *Joan of Arc*, of the Village of *Dompnez*; that her Father's Name is *James Arc*, and her Mother's *Isabella*; that the Name of one of her Godfathers is *John Lingue*, and of the other *John Berry*; that one of her Godmothers Names was *Jane*, the Name of another *Agnes*, and of another *Sibill*; and that she had heard her Mother say she had some others; that at this Time she was about twenty-nine Years of Age; that she was by Profession a Sempstress, and not a Shepherdess; that she went once a Year to Confession, and she had frequently heard a Voice from Heaven, that it was remarkably clear and strong, and that she took it for the Voice of an Angel; that it admonished her to go into *France*, where she should raise the Siege of *Orleans*; and that if she went to Captain *Robert de Baudricourt*, he would grant her an Escort to conduct her thither, which accordingly he did.”

I fancy, dear *Isaac*, that if I had not admitted the Virginity of our Heroine, I might have compared her Story to the Tale of Brother *Lucius*, which the ingenious *La Fontaine* hath put into Verse. Do not you think that Captain *Baudricourt* acted a little like the Hermit in that Story, who in a Voice like Thunder cried out, *Good Woman, carry your Daughter to the Servant of God, for between him and her there shall come a Child who will one Day become a great Pope*. I know very well that *Baudricourt* acted in this Case from another Motive distinct from Brother *Lucius*; it was Policy, and not Love, that played off this Scene. Taken in this Light, the Maid herself might have been deceived into the Part she acted;

acted; but her subsequent Conduct shews that she was very well acquainted with the Design she was to serve, and knew perfectly well how to play her Game. She was extremely desirous of passing for a Saint and a Heroine; and, without all doubt, she acted her Part beyond Comparison.

I must tell you, my Friend, a pleasant Notion that is just struck into my Head. I think I discover a strong Resemblance between *Joan of Arc* and *La Cadere*; the one had in view the Defeat of the *English*, and the other of the *Jesuits*; both intended to cheat the Public and to pass for Saints, each of them pretended to a perfect Acquaintance with Heaven and with the Blessed. As for our Maid, she pretended to have Revelations from the Deity. For instance, it is said in her Process, "She asserts that she knows God, loves the Duke of *Orleans*, and that she had had more Revelations in respect to him, than to any other Man living, except the Person whom she calls her King*."

You see, dear *Isaac*, that the Supreme Being communicated his Secrets to this Saint, as she said. We shall next see what Care was taken to provide faithful Messengers; it was she herself informed her Judges of this Particular.

"Being interrogated whether she had heard a Voice, she answered, *Yesterday I heard it three times; first in the Morning, then about the Time of Vespers, and the third time in the Night.* Being asked if she had ever seen any Fairies, she answered, *No; but that a Godmother of hers had boasted of seeing them at the Fairies Tree, in a little Copse not far from their Village of Dompree.*

* *Item dixit, quod bene scit, quod Deus diligit Ducem Aurelianensem; ac etiam plures Revelationes de ipso habuerat, quàm de alio homine vivente, excepto illo quem dixit Regem suum.*

“ Being asked who they were that spoke to her,
 “ she answered, *St. Catherine and St. Margaret,*
 “ *whom she had often seen and touched, even since her*
 “ *being in Prison, and kissed the Ground whereon they*
 “ *trod; that she asked them their Advice on each Ex-*
 “ *amination, and that she had assumed the Habit of a*
 “ *Man at their express Command.*”

Was I in the wrong to say that there was great Care taken as to the Messengers who visited this Maid of ours? Methinks *Catherine and Margaret* were Persons of some Distinction. A Circumstance of this nature would furnish a Monkish Writer with abundance of fine Reflections, if the Life of our Saint was his Theme; he would doubtless observe the great Wisdom in sending She, and not He-Saints to converse with this holy Maid; since she would certainly have been afraid to have staid long alone with a Man, or even with the Appearance of a Man, especially if the Saint had been of the Order of *Cordeliers*, and wore the Habit: For you are to remark, that these celestial Visitors came first to *Joan of Arc* at a Time of Life when she might have been very easily frightened; for in one of her Answers she says, that at the Tree of the Fairies, and at a Fountain near to *Dompne*, she had spoke with *St. Catherine* and *St. Margaret*, but not to the Fairies, and that her first Conversation with them was when she was thirteen Years old.

Is it lawful, my Friend, for an Author, who has otherwise a great deal of Merit, to attempt to prove the Inspiration of the *Maid of Orleans*, by Stories so visibly fabulous as these are? Whenever these Answers are mentioned to a Philosopher who makes use of his Reason, he will not hesitate a Moment, let his Religion be what it will, in asserting that the Whole was a Scheme of Policy. Ought we to be astonished at the odd Things we meet with in *Greek and Roman* Writers,

Writers, when we see *French* Historians in great Esteem boldly tell so puerile a Fable as this, and so contrary to Common Sense? How shall a Christian, who pretends to swallow this Tale, give his Reasons for rejecting the Stories with which the Writings of an *Herodotus* are sprinkled?

To be thoroughly convinced of the Absurdity of this pious Fraud, we need only consider a little the Conduct of this Woman while she was in Prison. "Being solicited by her Judges to put on again the Habit of a Woman, she said, she desired never to use any female Garment, except a Shift might be put upon her dead Body: And being afterwards told, that she should be admitted to the Communion if she would lay aside Men's Clothes, she took it into her head to prefer her Breeches to all Things, and to chuse rather to live as an excommunicated Person than to put on a Petticoat." At last, however, she submitted to go to Mass in a Gown, but upon this express Condition, that she might again put on Men's Clothes when she came from Chapel. Was not this a whimsical Fancy *?

What is still more extraordinary, it was in compliance to the Orders of St. *Catherine* and St. *Margaret* that she was so much attached to her Breeches; it is true, she suffered dearly for following their Advice. "The Prosecutor having finished his Evidence, says *Pasquier*, Sentence was pronounced by the Bishop: He said, *That all that had been done by this Woman was to be accounted Fiction and Delusion, in order to seduce the poor People, or else the Invention of the Devil; and that in acting in this manner she had blasphemed against the Honour of God, acted*

* We are told this in Latin, every way worthy the Times wherein the Maid of Orleans suffered as a Witch. *Noluit huic præcepto obsequi: in quo appareret Pervicacia ejus, et Obduratio ad Malum, et contemptus Sacramentorum.*

" undu-

“ undutifully towards her Parents, besides shewing her-
 “ self a very impious Person, in declining the holy Com-
 “ munion rather than part with the Habit of the ~~other~~
 “ Sex. There concurred in this Judgment the Bishops
 “ of *Constance* and *Lisieux*, the Chapter of the Ca-
 “ thedral Church of *Roan*, sixteen Doctors, six Li-
 “ centiates and Batchelors of Divinity, and eleven
 “ Advocates of *Roan*. This Sentence was transmitted
 “ to the University of *Paris*, in order to have their
 “ Opinion thereupon: The University declared that
 “ the Maid was truly a Heretick and a Schismatick,
 “ and directed two Letters, one to the King, the
 “ other to the Bishop of *Beauvais*, desiring she
 “ might be put to death.”

Notwithstanding the Decision of the University,
 the *English* were for saving her Life, provided always
 she would consent to quit those cursed Breeches, of
 which she had been hitherto so very fond. The holy
 Warriour finding at last that die she must, or put on
 a Petticoat, she wisely resolved to make choice of the
 latter, and this without waiting for the Advice of
 St. *Margaret*. “ They exposed her on a publick Scaf-
 “ fold, says *Pasquier*, where, after she had been ad-
 “ monished, she declared aloud that she submitted to
 “ the Judgment of God and of our Holy Father the
 “ Pope. Then perceiving that they expected still
 “ more from her, she professed her unfeigned Belief
 “ of all that the Church taught; and said farther,
 “ that since many wise and discreet People were of
 “ opinion that the Appearances she had seen were not
 “ from God, she was content to believe so, and to
 “ make a publick Abjuration, which is inserted at
 “ full length in her Process. Upon this followed ano-
 “ ther Sentence, whereby she is absolved from her
 “ Excommunication, and condemned to perpetual
 “ Imprisonment. After this, she resumed the Habit of
 “ her Sex, and was accordingly conducted back to
 “ Prison.”

See,

See, my Friend, the Maid's Affairs now in a pretty tolerable Condition, and her Life secured at the Expence of her Breeches. But the Mischief was, that she had put on her Coats without consulting *St. Catherine*, who was extremely vext to find her in a Woman's Garb; when she came next to make her a Visit, she reprimanded her severely. Who, said she, put you upon changing your Garb? resume, at all Events, that which I recommended, and let me see you do it this Minute. *Joan of Arc* obeyed, and very unluckily for her, as the Sequel of her Story, given us by *Pasquier*, will shew.

They had however left her Men's Clothes by her, in order to see what she would do. No sooner was she alone, than, upon second Thoughts, she repented of her Abjuration, and put on again the Clothes she had thrown aside. This Abjuration, dear *Isaac*, in my Opinion, resembles strongly that Recantation which *La Cadiere* made of the Crimes by her charged upon *Father Girard*; she too, quickly resumed her former Sentiments. *Joan of Arc* did the same Thing. The one was schooled by the *Jansenists*, the other by *St. Catherine*; but *Joan* paid for it very dearly. Early the next Morning she was visited, and being found in her old Habit, was asked how she came to make this Change; she said, she did it at the Command of the *Saints*, and that she was willing rather to obey God than Men. On these Words she was declared a Heretick relapsed, and in consequence thereof delivered over to the secular Arm, and condemned to be burnt alive.—The University of *Paris* also, willing to play its Part, ordered a Procession on the Feast of *St. Martin*, whereat a Dominican Friar made a solemn Declaration against this poor Wench, in order to shew that whatever she had done was by the Assistance of the Devil and not of God.

You

You see what a Noise and Disturbance a Petticoat and a Pair of Breeches occasioned, and what a Struggle there was which of the two this masculine Maid should wear. Surely this appears very ridiculous, and yet if we go to the Bottom of Things we must acknowledge, that the Dress of this Wench was a Point of State, and a proper Subject of refined Politicks. Those of the *French* Nation required that *Joan* should not quit her Breeches; and, on the other hand, it was requisite for the *English* that she should appear in Petticoats. The Reason you will easily perceive to be very well founded. The astonishing Impression which the Sanctity of *Joan of Arc* had made on the other Minds of the Soldiers of *Charles VII.* had totally ruined the *English* Affairs in *France*. In order therefore to restore them, and to destroy a Notion which was so advantageous to their Enemies, it became necessary for them to make the Maid disavow all her pretended Revelations. The Moment she laid aside her Breeches their Point was gained. On the other hand, *Joan of Arc* knew perfectly well of how great Use her Imposture was, and of what mighty Consequence her interesting the *Saints* in the Affair. This made her remain firm till the Fear of an approaching Death got the better of her Dissimulation. But being terrified with the Fear of Punishment, she consented at length to own the Falshood of the Tale she had told. When she had once taken this Step, the *English* ought to have rested there, as having effectually destroyed her Credit. But it seems they were not of this Opinion, they laid therefore a Snare for her utter Destruction, by leaving her Breeches in the Way. They might as well have shut up an hungry Dog in a Chamber full of Provisions, and charged him not to eat. The Maid being recovered from her first Fright, saw the Consequence of the false Step she had made, and had

had a mind to repair it. She flattered herself that the *English* durst not put her to death; but she mistook their Tempers.

After all, dear *Isaac*, though I deny the Holiness of *Joan of Arc*, I am far from detracting from the just Praises she deserved. She was certainly a Heroine, and delivered her Country. The Cruelty of the *English* towards her is a Stain upon them as a Nation. They ought to have looked upon their Prisoner with the Respect due to a Person faithful to her King and Country, and who served them as far as her Wit and Courage would carry her. If the *English* had at present such another Woman in their Hands, they would admire her Valour and venerate her Person, as much as they would condemn her Pretences to Saintship.

Adieu, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy, and let me have the Satisfaction of hearing from you.

London.



LETTER CLIII.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

AS much as I am prejudiced in favour of Mr. *Locke's* Sentiments, I can scarce grant him that the Soul sometimes ceases totally to think, that is, while we are asleep.

I do admit that I am not thoroughly satisfied that this Opinion is absolutely false, but I look upon it as doubtful, and therefore I should have been glad
he

he laid down his Notion as probable only, and not as certain. This sage Philosopher seems to me too much persuaded that the *Cartesians* are mistaken in their Definition of the Essence of the Soul, when they assure us that it consists in actual Thought. *We know*, says he, *certainly, by Experience, that sometimes we think, and hence we deduce this infallible Conclusion, that we have in us something which hath a Power of thinking: But to know whether this Substance thinks continually or not, is what we cannot be assured of, farther than Experience informs us. For to say that actual Thinking is an essential Property of the Soul, is visibly to beg the Question, without any kind of Proof*.*

I am of Opinion, my Friend, that *Locke* had no just Reason for this Reproach on the *Cartesians*, because there are several strong Reasons which seem to authorize this Definition, that the Essence of the Soul consists in the actual Faculty of thinking. The Soul, say the Philosophers, hath neither *Magnitude, Extent, nor Depth*. Thus then, none of those Attributes which belong to Matter can be assigned thereto. We know then but one of its Qualities, viz. that of thinking. Have we not Reason then to alledge that it cannot subsist without this, and that it is its Essence, because it is the only Quality which we have discovered. For, as we are acquainted with the Existence of Matter only by the means of its Extension, so all the Knowledge we have of Souls is by Thought. Inasmuch as we hesitate not to define the Essence of Matter by Extension, on account of our knowing no material Substance but what is extended, why should we not define the Essence of the Soul by the actual Exercise of Thought, since we cannot perceive a spiritual Substance but what hath this Faculty of thinking.

* *Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, Book III Chap. i. §. 10. All the Quotations are in this Chapter.*

Though

Though it may be possible to answer these Objections, or at least to shew that they are not convincing, it must however be acknowledged that they ought to be thoroughly examined, and that they very well deserve our Attention: The *Cartesians* are far from asserting that the Soul always thinks, *without Proofs*. *Locke* therefore had no Right to reproach these Philosophers for advancing, without Evidence and against Reason, a Question with Respect to Fact, and that there was nothing but might be proved, according to their Method. "I need only suppose, said he, that all Watches think while the Balance is in motion, and I shall have thereby sufficiently proved that my Watch thought all last Night long." But the *Cartesians* might say, *You have no Right to say that your Watch thinks while the Balance moves, because you have not only no probable Reason to assert that the Motion of a Balance hath any thing to do with Thought, but you are, on the other hand, fully assured, that inasmuch as it is a material Substance, it has no other Qualities than those of Extent, Quantity and Thickness. But with Respect to us, the Case is very different. We say that the Soul thinks as well when we are asleep as when we are awake, because we were sure that the Faculty of thinking belongs thereto, not only when the Body is awake, but asleep, of which the Remembrance of our Dreams is a certain and evident Proof. We therefore have some Foundation to conclude, that it may do continually what it does for some Moments; whereas your Supposition of the Balance and the Watch is absurd and ridiculous.*

I will continue, dear *Isaac*, my Examination of *Locke's* Sentiments, and I beseech you to give me your Opinion of the Difficulties which appear in them to me. *The first Time we fall fast asleep, says that Philosopher, I apprehend we shall be sufficiently*
satisfied

satisfied that there is nothing in their Doctrine, who teach that the Soul always thinks. At least those who have slept without dreaming can never be convinced that their Thoughts were in Action, during the Space of four Hours, while they knew nothing of the Matter; and if they are taken in the very Act, waked in the Middle of that sleeping Contemplation, can give no manner of Account of it. It will perhaps be said, that the Soul thinks, even in the soundest Sleep, but the Memory retains it not: That the Soul, in this sleeping Man, should be this Moment busy a thinking; and the next Moment, in a waking Man, not remember, or be able to recollect one jot of all those Thoughts, is very hard to be conceived, and would need some better Proof than bare Assertion to make it be believed.

The Cartesians might reply to these Objections, that far from resting their Notions on the Assurance they give us of their Justice and Truth, they rely on daily Experience for the Proof of their Opinions. For in Fact, does it not seem an odd thing to be amazed that a Man, waking on a sudden, should lose in an Instant, the Thoughts which occupied him while he slept; whereas we daily see Men in their full Senses, and broad awake, forgetting one Minute what they thought on a Minute before, and striving to no purpose, to recover their first Thought? There is not a Man in this World to whom these Slips do not sometimes happen; and there is nothing more common than to hear a Man say, I had this Minute something to tell you, it has escaped me, I have done all I can to recollect it, but I find it is absolutely in vain. I would ask, my dear Isaac, if the Soul, forgetting totally certain Thoughts which occupied it a Moment before, while the Body it occupies is wide awake, we ought to think it extraordinary that it loses the Remembrance of those Thoughts which employed it while the Body was asleep,

asleep, of which consequently it could have but light Impressions, its Organs being, in a manner, stopt up and able to serve it but faintly. Shall we say that it is not impossible that the Soul may rest for a Moment, that is, cease from thinking, even when a Man is awake; and that is forgetting its Perceptions is owing to this short and imperceptible Cessation of Thought? This would be an Absurdity so great and so evident, that Experience alone would sufficiently detect it. The sage *Locke* was too quick-sighted to adopt such an Opinion. He says, on the contrary, *that it is admitted the Soul never ceases to think while a Man is awake, because this is precisely what, in this respect, constitutes his Condition.* Who then can shew us a Reason for a Man's forgetting his own Thoughts while he is awake? Let us, I say, see him who will answer this Question, and he will have a Right to oblige the *Cartesians*, in their turn, to explain how a Man may think all Night without knowing, the next Morning, any thing of the Ideas which occupied his Mind for so many Hours.

The Difficulty which *Locke* proposes, as to the Inutility of the Soul's thinking during the Time of Sleep, does not appear to me very considerable. "To think often, says he, and never to retain it, so much as one Moment, is a very useless Sort of thinking, and the Soul in such a State of thinking does very little, if at all, excel that of a Looking-Glass, which constantly receives Variety of Images or Ideas, but retains none; they disappear and vanish, and there appears no Footsteps of them; the Looking-Glass is never the better for such Ideas, nor the Soul for such Thoughts.—If the Soul retains no Memory of its own Thoughts, if it cannot lay them up for its Use, and be able to recall them upon occasion;

" if

“ if it cannot reflect upon what is past and make
 “ use of its former Experiences, Reasonings and
 “ Contemplations, to what purpose does it think?
 “ They who make the Soul a thinking Thing, at
 “ this rate will not make it a more noble Being
 “ than those do whom they condemn for allowing
 “ it to be nothing but the subtlest Parts of Mat-
 “ ter.—Nature never makes excellent Things
 “ for mean or no Uses; and it is hardly to be con-
 “ ceived, that our infinitely wise Creator should
 “ make so admirable a Faculty as the Power of
 “ Thinking, to be so idly employed, at least a
 “ quarter Part of its Time, as to think constantly
 “ without remembering any of its Parts.”

This Passage, my dear *Isaac*, contains two Ob-
 jections. The first respects the Inutility of Thoughts
 to a Man asleep. But to this the *Cartesians* may
 well reply to *Locke*, that those Thoughts which he
 looks upon as superfluous may be very necessary,
 though we are not acquainted with their Use: Because
 it is too hasty a Conclusion, that, in consequence
 of our not knowing what Use a Thing is for,
 therefore it ought not to be. The Weakness of hu-
 man Understanding hinders it from penetrating the
 Use of a Multitude of Beings, which exist notwith-
 standing; nor have we any Right to deny their Ex-
 istence. Besides, Experience inclines us to believe
 that Men really reap Profit from the Thoughts which
 their Souls have in Sleep, though they are not commu-
 nicated to the Body. The Translator of *Locke* re-
 marks very justly, that the Inutility of these Kind
 of Thoughts is not so certain as our Author ima-
 gines. *A Child*, says he, *is obliged to get by Heart*
a dozen or fifteen Verses out of Virgil: He reads
them three or four Times just before he is going to sleep,
and repeats them as soon as he awakes in the Morning,
perfectly well. Does his Soul think of these Verses
while

while he is buried in a profound Sleep? The Child knows nothing of the Matter. However, if the Soul actually ruminated on the Verses, as I think I may suspect, with some Appearance of Reason, then here are certain Thoughts not altogether useless for Man, though he has no Sort of Remembrance that his Soul was employed about them so much as one Moment*.

The second Objection of Locke falls of itself. For when we have destroyed the first, and have proved that the Thoughts of a Man asleep may be useful to him though he cannot remember that he thought, it can no longer be said that Nature does nothing in vain, and that God, acting always with infinite Wisdom, bestows not superfluous Faculties on any Being: In order to have made his Reasons clear and conclusive, it ought to have been evidently and unanswerably proved, that the Thoughts of a Man asleep are absolutely useless; and even after that there would remain a Difficulty to be resolved. *Of what Use, might one say to Mr. Locke, are Dreams? Are they very useful or necessary to Men, or do they draw any great Advantage from the dark Remembrance of certain whimsical Ideas presented to their Imaginations? Here are Thoughts that are little better than useless, and yet occupy the human Soul while the Body is asleep. God therefore may have afforded Man a Faculty of forming other Thoughts, of which he entirely loses all Remembrance.*

Fare thee well, dear Isaac, live content and happy.

London.

* *Remarque à la Page 73. de la 2d Edition; i. e. of P. Coste's Translation of Locke's Essay on Human Understanding.*



LETTER CLIV.

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraite, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.*

I HAVE examined, with all imaginable Attention, the Letter you wrote me concerning the Difficulties you find in that Opinion, which will not admit actual Thinking to be the Essence of the Soul. After comparing your Objections with what *Locke* hath written on the Subject, I am thoroughly persuaded that it was on a good Foundation this sage Philosopher maintained that there is an Appearance of the Soul's resting, during considerable Intervals, without thinking.

The Comparison you make between *Extension* as the Essence of Matter, and the *actual Exercise of Thought*, as the Essence of the Soul, doth not appear to me either just or conclusive. I could farther deny, that Extension is the Essence of Matter, and could alledge that you are so far from knowing what constitutes a spiritual Substance, that you are ignorant even of the first Principles of material Things. *Des Cartes*, says a modern Philosopher, * *makes the Essence of a Body consist in Extension, and concludes that there is Extension wherever there is Matter.*—

* *Philosophie du Bon Sens, ou Reflexions Philosophiques à l'Usage des Chevaliers et du Beau Sexe, pag. 278.* That is, *The Philosophy of good Sense, or Philosophical Reflections for the Use of Gentlemen and Ladies. By the Marquis d'Argens, the Author of this Book.*

I ask

I ask then what Reason there is that Extension should constitute the Nature and Essence of a Body rather than Solidity, or any other essential Quality of Matter. For by this Attention to a single Attribute abstracted from all the rest, we are given to understand that the other Qualities may subsist without it, which is contrary however to their Nature. I may single out any particular Attribute, stop there, and suppose it to constitute the Essence of Body. If I hold in my Hand a Sphere, I may, by Abstraction, suppose that all its Weight is in its Centre, and attend only to this Idea of its Centre. It would however be absurd for me to conclude that the Nature and Essence of Body consists in Gravity only. Besides, we do not know all that is in this Body, at least, we cannot demonstrate these Notions of ours. Therefore we do not certainly know how it is constituted; and though we perceive not above seven or eight Attributes, yet can we not assure ourselves that it hath none others, without which its Existence would be as impossible as without those seven or eight which are known to us. If the Nature of a Thing consists of thirty Attributes necessary and inseparable, and ten of these should be taken away, it would be ridiculous in us to suppose we still had that thing which absolutely required thirty. On the contrary, we have another Thing which absolutely requires a lesser Number of Attributes to form its Existence. It is the same thing with respect to Body; of which, as we cannot demonstrate that we know all its Attributes, it is also impossible that we should precisely know what constitutes its Essence.

You see then, *Monceca*, that there are very strong Reasons against the pretended Certainty of the *Cartesians*, with respect to the Essence of Matter. Now if it be true that Men are uncertain as to the Nature of Bodies, why should they flatter themselves that they have clear and distinct Notions of the Nature of the Soul? Might not *Locke* very well say

to the *Cartesians*, Before you persuade yourselves that you ought to define the *Essence of Matter by Extension*, and that of the *Soul by actual Thought*, because you cannot imagine any corporeal Thing without Extension, or any spiritual Being without the Faculty of Thinking; stay till you are clearly informed as to all the different Attributes which are absolutely necessary to these different Substances, that you may not allow a single Attribute to be the *Essence of a Thing*, which it may be requires thirty, of which you are ignorant, and yet, nevertheless, they are absolutely necessary as to its Existence. You believe, or at least you would persuade others that you believe that you are certain, in the Notions you have of the *Essence of spiritual and material Beings*; yet one may very reasonably say that you are so far from knowing the Nature of these Substances, that you are absolutely ignorant wherein consists the Difference between them.

I do not know, my Friend, whether ever you have taken notice of what *Locke* wisely objects to the *Cartesians*, on the Subject of Man's Ignorance as to the *Essence of the human-Soul*. “ We have,
 “ says he, the Ideas of Matter and Thinking, but
 “ possibly shall never be able to know whether any
 “ mere material Being thinks or no, it being im-
 “ possible for us, by the Contemplation of our own
 “ Ideas; without Revelation, to discover whether
 “ Omnipotency has not given to some Systems of
 “ Matter fitly disposed, a Power to perceive and
 “ think; or else joined and fixed to Matter so dis-
 “ posed a thinking immaterial Substance; it being
 “ in respect of our Notions, not much more re-
 “ mote from our Comprehension to conceive that
 “ God can, if he pleases, superadd to Matter a
 “ Faculty of thinking, than that he should super-
 “ add to it another Substance with a Faculty of
 “ thinking——For since we must allow God has
 “ annexed

“ annexed Effects to Motion, which we can no
 “ way conceive Motion able to produce, what
 “ Reason have we to conclude that he could not
 “ order them, as well to be produced in a Subject
 “ we cannot conceive capable of them, as well as
 “ in a Subject we cannot conceive the Motion of
 “ Matter can any way operate upon?”

Before it is defined that the Soul always thinks,
 and that it is contrary to its Essence to remain some-
 times altogether unactive while the Body sleeps, the
Cartesians ought to shew us, not only full Answers
 to *Locke's* Objections, but also that we are under no
 kind of Uncertainty as to the Nature of the Soul.
 If they cannot demonstratively prove that it is not
 material, which they cannot do, because they are
 ignorant of its Nature, what do they mean by de-
 fining its Essence, and founding all their Reasonings
 upon that rash Definition? Dr. *Stillingfleet* would
 have persuaded *Locke*, that the Necessity of the Soul's
 being spiritual might be demonstrated, and that the
 giving to Matter a Power of thinking was impos-
 sible, even to God. To the old Reasons of the
Cartesians, he added some new ones. You may find
 a clear Detail of this whole Dispute in the Notes to
 the Essay on Human Understanding. The *English*
 Philosopher says to his Adversary, “ Our Idea of
 “ Matter in general being a solid Substance, and
 “ our Idea of a Body a solid, extended, figured
 “ Substance; you pretend, if I admit Matter to be
 “ capable of thinking, I confound the Idea of Mat-
 “ ter with the Idea of a Spirit; to which I answer,
 “ No, no more than I confound the Idea of Mat-
 “ ter with the Idea of a Horse, when I say, that
 “ Matter in general is a solid extended Substance,
 “ and that a Horse is a material Animal, or an ex-
 “ tended solid Substance with Sense and spontane-
 “ ous Motion. The Idea of Matter is an extended

“ solid Substance; where-ever there is such a Sub-
 “ stance there is Matter, and the Effence of Mat-
 “ ter, whatever other Qualities, not contained in
 “ that Substance, it shall please God to superadd to
 “ it. For Example, God creates an extended so-
 “ lid Substance, without the superadding any thing
 “ else to it; and so we may consider it at rest: To
 “ some Parts of it he superadds Motion, but it has
 “ still the Effence of Matter; other Parts of it he
 “ frames into Plants, with all the Excellencies of
 “ Vegetation, Life, and Beauty, which is to be
 “ found in a Rose, or a Peach-Tree, above the
 “ Effence of Matter in general; but it is still Mat-
 “ ter: To other Parts, he adds Sense and spontane-
 “ ous Motion, and those other Properties that are
 “ to be found in an Elephant. All this is allowed;
 “ but if one ventures to go a Step farther, and say,
 “ God may give to Matter, Thought, Reason,
 “ and the Power of Willing, as well as Sense and
 “ spontaneous Motion, there are Men ready pre-
 “ sently to limit the Power of the omnipotent
 “ Creator*.” To these Objections, dear *Mon-*
sieur, Dr. *Stillingfleet* could oppose nothing that was
 reasonable. He had Recourse to general Terms,
 which had been over and over examined, and in-
 vincibly refuted. Let us acknowledge then frank-
 ly, that we know nothing of the Soul. We know
 that in Men awake it always thinks, but whether
 it hath any Perceptions while we are asleep, is a
 Thing we never can be clear in.

As to what you say of the sudden Loss of Thought
 which Men daily perceive when they are awake, it
 can, by no means, be compared with those into
 which the Soul falls, in case it were certain it

Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, Book IV.
Chap. iii.

thought

thought while we slept. For a Man awake, who forgets something which was in his Head a Moment before, remembers he thought, though he cannot recollect of what, because his Mind is distracted by other Ideas; he retains, however, a certain Conviction and perfect Remembrance that he had some Perceptions, whereas a Man who has slept all Night, wakes the next Morning without knowing that his Mind perceived any Idea whatsoever. One ought to regard such Slips in a Man, who is awake, as the Consequence of a continual Circulation of Ideas. It is not reasonable, therefore, to explain after this manner, that Ignorance in which the Soul appears to be on the waking of the Body, as to all the fine Thoughts with which he is supposed to have been occupied. Had not then *Locke* Reason to say, *Wake a Man out of a deep Sleep, and ask him what he was thinking of. If he knew not that he had been thinking, he must be a very extraordinary Person to assert that he never ceased to think. Might not one with more Reason affirm that he had not slept? This is, beyond all doubt, a Matter out of the reach of Philosophy; and there is nothing but an express Revelation could discover to another that certain Thoughts passed in my Soul, though I did not discover them myself. These People must certainly have very piercing Eyes to discern certainly that I think, while I myself cannot perceive it, and expressly declare as much. What is still more remarkable, these same Eyes, which see more in me than I see in myself, can also perceive that Dogs and Elephants do not think, though these Animals give us all imaginable Demonstrations of their thinking except telling us as much.*

As to Dreams, dear *Monceca*, which you fancy favour your Sentiment, take care that it does not overturn it, for it seems that they are evident Proofs that when the Soul does think in our Sleep we are sensible of

it; and that it cannot think at all, but the whole human Machine must be sensible thereof. I agree with you as to the Inutility of Dreams, but then they are occasioned by second Causes: They are occasioned by certain Motions in the Brain during our Sleep. Their Inutility therefore cannot excuse that of the pretended Power of Thinking in the Soul, which it must derive immediately from God, since it cannot be produced by any Passions of the Body, otherwise it would have Knowledge of them, as this Sensibility in Dreams clearly proves. *Locke* then had Reason to say that Nature makes nothing in vain, and that it is by no means likely that the Soul should have a Faculty of employing itself about useless Thoughts while the Body is asleep. Read over again with Attention, dear *Monceca*, all that *Locke* has said in support of his Sentiment, and I am persuaded you will never more accuse him of being too decisive.

Adieu my Friend, live content and happy.

Cairo.



LETTER CLV.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS, *Caraite*,
heretofore a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *English*, dear *Isaac*, are very nice Observers of their Laws, they follow the Text strictly, without seeking Explications which may elude them, or under Pretence of entering into the Idea

Idea of the Legislator, converting the Study of their Laws into an arbitrary Science. The Courts wherein Justice is distributed, are never in the least doubt, whether such a Crime is to be punished in such a manner. It is the Care of the Judges only to discover whether the Party accused be really guilty. This once decided, the Law speaks the Penalty of its Transgression. In *England* the Judge only reports the Process; the Law itself is, properly speaking, the Judge.

One cannot, my Friend, sufficiently approve a Practice so prudent and so judicious. Whatever Probity Men may be endowed with, who are placed in the Seats of Justice, it is expedient to limit their Decisions, and not to leave it in their Breasts to punish or to leave unpunished, as they think fit, those who come before them. The Heart of Man is the Seat of so many Passions, and his Understanding is so often the Dupe of his Prejudices, that it is next to an Impossibility he should not err whenever he acts without Restraint. If Judges did not need Direction, written Laws had never been compiled; but all Things had been left to the Understandings of the Judges. But it was justly apprehended, that Judges might act like Men, even in discharge of their Offices, and see Things through such Mists of Passion as might change their Form and Figure, or disguise them at least.

I am very sensible, my Friend, that a rigid Observance of Laws may sometimes create Mischiefs, for which there can be no Remedies. I know too, that there are Cases wherein it might be justly wished that we might interpret the Will of the Legislator, so as to give it a more or less extended Sense. But I know too, that if such a Liberty as this might be in some Cases useful to private Persons, it would not however fail to become dangerous,

and even fatal to the Publick. It would accustom the Judges to arbitrary Decisions, and open a Gate to a thousand Inconveniencies, which would not fail to enter. But when a general Rule is established, we seek not the Good of two or three Persons, but of the far greater Part of the Society *. *Seneca*, speaking of the *Roman* Laws about insolvent Debtors, which made no Distinction between such as grew insolvent through inevitable Accidents, and those who, by Gaming and Debauchery, drew their Punishments justly upon them; observes roundly, that it is better a few should run the Risque of losing the Benefit of a just Excuse, rather than Room be left for all the World to avoid paying, or suffering for Nonpayment by setting up specious Pretences †.

It is sufficient, dear *Isaac*, to compel our Approbation of this wise Custom, to submit entirely and without Reserve to the Laws, that Reason and Experience shew this Custom is more beneficial to the Publick than that which leaves an arbitrary Authority to the Judges. For as nobody pretends to doubt, that Men in general need some Support to prevent their giving way to their Passions; so, as Judges are not Angels, they want Supports as well as other Men; and this they may find by a steady

* *Nulla Lex satis commoda omnibus est: id modo quaeritur si majori Parti & in summam prodest.* Tit. Livius. Lib. XXXIV. cap. iii. num, 1.

† *Quid tu tam imprudentes judicas majores nostros fuisse, ut non intelligerent, iniquissimum esse eodem loco haberi eum qui Pecuniam, quam à Creditore acceperat, Libidine aut Aleâ absumpsit, & eum qui Incendio, aut Latrocinio, aut aliquo Casu tristiore, aliena cum suis perdidit? Nullam Excusationem receperunt, ut Homines scirent Fidem utique præstandam. Satiùs enim erat à paucis etiam justam Excusationem non accipi, quam ab omnibus aliquam tentari.* Seneca de Beneficiis, Lib. VII. Cap. xvi.

Adherence

Adherence to the Laws, which will alike prevent their Hearts from being seduced, or their Understandings imposed on.

From this Necessity of yielding a precise Obedience to the Will of the Legislators, there flows a need of having no Laws in force, but what are strictly equitable and just. Whenever, through a Change of Times and Circumstances, Laws, which were once wise and salutary, become of another Nature, there is a Necessity of rescinding and making them void. There cannot be a more dangerous Error for a State, or one more capable of disturbing the publick Tranquillity, than the Respect which some Nations affect to pay to certain whimsical and ridiculous Laws, and the Memories of those who made them. One would imagine, that they were not Men but Deities who instituted these perpetuated Customs; and that being revealed to them, who yield to them, as the Contents of our sacred Scriptures were to us, they stood in awe of their Indignation who gave them, in case they broke through them. Unhappy Consequences of Prejudices embraced in our Infancy, whereby a whole Society is sacrificed to an Impertinence inserted in the written Law, or ingrafted into a Body of old Customs!

We should have much less Respect for Legislators if we reflected that there is scarce one of them, even amongst the most knowing or illustrious, who has not introduced something extravagant or ridiculous, or contrary to the Rules of strict Morality and Humanity at least. *Lycurgus* ordained, by the Laws he gave to *Sparta*, that young Women should wrestle stark-naked before Men, and that they should dance before them in the same manner, and sing certain Songs. This Legislator, in the Institution of this extravagant Custom, had in view the

N. 5

giving

giving Strength to the young Women's Bodies, that they might bring forth strong healthy Children, and feel less Inconveniency in Child-bearing. Such a Method of rendering Women robust was not to be practised, without bidding Adieu to all Sense of Shame or Decency; or must not a Man have banished from his Thoughts all the Rules of good Manners and of natural Modesty, before he could think of introducing a Custom so inevitably destructive of them? The Pagans themselves, in the midst of the Impieties and Darknes of their Religion, could not avoid discovering how contrary this infamous Law was to good Manners. In the *Andromache* of *Euripides*, *Peleus* attributes the Looseness of *Helena* entirely to her being educated at *Sparta*. *It is not in the Power of Spartan Ladies*, says he, *to be modest if they would; they come out of their Parents Houses with Petticoats through which their Limbs are visible. They run and wrestle with the young Men; which I cannot suffer. After this, are you astonished that these Women are debauched one and all?* This Passage from a Greek

* — Οὐς αὖ, εἰ βούλοιτο τις,
 Εὐφρων γένετο Σπαρτιατίδων χάρις,
 Ἀἰετὸν νόοισιν ἐξερήμῃσαι δόμους,
 Γυμνοῖσι μπροῖς, καὶ πέπλοις ἀναιμένοις,
 Δόμους παλαῆστρας τ' ἐν ἀνδροχέτας ἐμὸν
 Κοινὰς ἔχουσι κατὰ διαμάχαις χρεῶν,
 Εἰ μὴ γυναικῶς σωφρονὸς παιδεύετε.

— Neque, si velit aliqua
 Puella Spartana, possit esse casta:
 Quæ, relinquentes Domos, cum Juuenibus,
 Nudis Femoribus, & Tunicis laxatis,
 Cursus, & Palestras, non tolerandas mihi,
 Communes habent. Deinde an mirari oportet,
 Si non educatis Mulieres castas?

Euripides, Androm. Ver. 598. p. 519.

Poet,

Poet, which so justly condemns that Debauchery which *Lycurgus* had established on such false and ridiculous Pretences, is an evident Proof that Probity and Modesty have found Advocates, even amongst Nations whose established Religions were impious, and but too favourable to the Motions of the Passions. *Virtue*, says a Nazarene Father, *was respected, even where Debauchery bore the Sway**. May we not with Reason stand amazed, that such as took upon them the Care of Mankind, and the prescribing to them Laws, should nevertheless be more deficient, in respect to a Sense of Shame and good Manners, than private Men?

The Errors of ancient Lawgivers ought to serve as Cautions to such as have, in these Days, the Power of altering or rescinding Laws. They should be hindered, by considering of them, from having any Prejudices in favour of such as have been enacted by their Ancestors, so as to doubt of the Expediency of repealing them, whenever they are found either useless or dangerous. Is it not ridiculous to have more Respect, either for a Man or for a Custom, because the Man has been dead, or the Custom established five hundred Years, than if the Person was now living, or the Custom just instituted? If we were once agreed on this Principle, it would be easy to shew that such as are charged with the Care of superintending the Laws of several Nations, would find enough to point out such as ought to be abrogated, and to distinguish the Good from the Bad.

* *Tanta Vis est Probitatis & Castitatis, ut omnis, vel penè omnis, ejus Laude moveatur Humana Natura; nec usque adeo sit Turpitudine viciosa, ut totum amittat Sensum Honestatis.* August. de Civit. Dei, Lib. II. Cap. xxvi. p. 255.

Lycurgus had established in *Sparta* a Senate composed of twenty-eight Persons, who balanced and kept within Bounds the Power of their Monarchs. *Aristotle* censures the Construction of this Senate, because the Members were for Life. *The Mind*, says he, *grows old as well as the Body; it is unjust to commit the Lives and Fortunes of our Countrymen to such as may become incapable of preserving them.*

Plato could by no means approve what *Lycurgus* had ordained, as to throwing into a certain Pool at the Foot of Mount *Tagetes* such Children as were born ill-shaped, tender, or with any kind of Defect.

Aristotle, on the contrary, praises this unnatural Cruelty, which ought rather to be exercised by wild Beasts than by Men. As to Children, who should be bred up or exposed, that Philosopher says, the Law ought to provide against the bringing up such as are imperfect, or any ways maimed in their Limbs; and that in such Places as the Laws of the Country would not permit of this, another Expedient, which he mentions, should be practised.

After reading a Proposition so absurd, so cruel, and so apparently repugnant to Humanity, ought we blindly to adopt Laws made by Men, who are held ever so much superior to the rest of their Species, on account of the Strength of their Understandings? Happy, my Friend, is the Nation where the Laws are inviolably adhered to; and where, at the same time, none are received but what are founded in Virtue, Prudence, and Probity! That which, in too many Countries, gives the Judges room to raise themselves above the Laws, to attribute to themselves a kind of despotick Authority, and, in criminal Matters especially, to erect a kind of arbitrary Jurisdiction, in the visible Flaws in the written Laws of those Nations. As they have it

not in their Powers either to alter or abrogate those Laws, they take this Method of explaining them to their Fancy; and this, after a hundred different Methods, according as they apprehend a Variety of Cases may require. In all these different Explications, they very often mistake the Motions of their Passions for Impressions of Justice; and if at any time they save thereby some innocent Persons, it is probable they free as many who are guilty.

I return, dear *Isaac*, to the manner in which the *English* administer Justice. It is wise, prudent, and worthy the Imitation of all other Nations. Whenever they perceive a Law to be wanting, they enact it; and take care to execute it strictly, till they see Cause to abrogate it. If, in process of Time, they perceive it to be hurtful, they do not endeavour to elude it by Explications, but repeal it. From an Apprehension of introducing this pernicious Custom, of leaving Judges at Liberty to follow their Caprices in Matters of Life, or even of the Properties of their Fellow-Citizens, instead of granting an unlimited Authority to Magistrates, the *English* allow their Kings to be only Protectors of the Laws, and not Tyrants.

Adieu, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy; and may the God of our Fathers cover thee with Blessings.

London.



L E T T E R CLVI.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE strange Humours, dear *Isaac*, which I have observed in the Nations through which I have rambled; those Errors and Prejudices which, generally speaking, blind Mankind, have obliged me to reflect seriously on the bad State of Morality among the *Europeans*. They are thoroughly persuaded that the Maxims they follow are more conformable to Reason, and the Nature of Things, than are those of the *Africans* and *Asiatics*. However, when we nicely examine their Sentiments, especially such as are founded on the Authority of their Divines, we easily discover that they are as wide of Justice and Equity as those of the *Cannibals*, or any other Savages.

We need not be astonished that People do not perceive Errors in which they are grown up, and of which they grow every Day more and more persuaded. They cover them with a Veil of Religion and Piety; and thus they render them venerable. They believe that they serve God in digressing from the Rules of Morality. How then should we wonder at such Digressions?

The first *Nazarene* Doctors, whom they commonly call the Apostles, preached a Doctrine so conformable to Equity, and of such high Use to Society,

Society, that their greatest Adversaries acknowledge their moral Precepts to be infinitely superior to those of the wisest Philosophers among the Ancients. Our Rabbies themselves readily admit, that if the *Nazarenes* followed exactly the fundamental Principles of their System of Morals, they would be obliged to esteem them as Men every way more worthy of Praise than *Socrates* himself. But unfortunately for them, and still more so for us, they have entirely abandoned the Sentiments of their first Doctors; and their Morality at this Day, is a kind of political Patchwork, wherein they have endeavoured to preserve some outward Resemblance of their true and ancient System.

It seems to me, dear *Isaac*, that Men are born to be the Dupes of all such as pretend to instruct them for their own Good, and yet really intend to serve their private Interests thereby: Two hundred Years after these first *Nazarene* Doctors had opened the Eyes of their Disciples, and taught them the Rules of exact Equity, a set of Divines sprung up, who made it their Business to destroy what the others had built up*. Among these there was one *Origen*, a Man of a dark and gloomy Temper, who was for pushing Things to Extremity. His Humour carried him so far as to make him the first Victim of the Whimsicalness of his own Ideas. For in a strong Fit of Enthusiasm, he castrated himself, that he might be able to instruct Women in the Principles of Religion, without running any Risque of yielding to Temptation.

Tertullian departed still farther from the Rules of true Morality. He published and maintained Opinions which absolutely overturned all Rule and

* See the second Part of *The Secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters*, in which our Author treats amply of the *Fathers* of the Church.

Order in States: He pretended that a *Nazarene* could not in Conscience execute the Office of a Judge, damning all Magistrates without Restriction, and insinuating, that to be an Emperor, and remain a Christian, was impracticable.

These first Errors, so contrary to sound Morality, were quickly increased by new ones, invented and published by other Doctors; each Age produced an Author, who sapped some essential Point of that equitable System which the first *Nazarene* Doctors had established: For though these Writers were Men of Genius, Learning and Merit, they nevertheless gave way to the impetuous Motions of their respective Tempers, and became the first Dupes of their own Passions. In the time when the *Arians* had the Emperors on their Side, *Gregory Nazianzen* declaimed against all Persecutions; he preached warmly for Toleration, and maintained, that only gentle Methods were to be made use of to persuade the Minds of Men. But when on the Death of an Emperor, his Successor proved no Favourer of *Arianism*, the same *Gregory* wrote a Letter to *Nectarius*, exhorting him to represent to the Emperor, that Piety and Religion demanded he should not permit the Hereticks to assemble, or shew any kind of Regard to the Privileges which had been granted them. So far was this *Nazarene* Doctor from preaching a Morality as pure as that of the first Founders of this Religion, that his Doctrines fell infinitely below those of the Pagan Philosophers, who all acknowledged, that that Fidelity, which consists in Sincerity, and in maintaining one's Word, is the Foundation of all Justice*.

* *Fundamentum est autem Justitiæ Fides; id est Dictorum Conventorumque Constantia & Veritas, Cicero de Officiis, Libr. I. Cap. VII.*

This

This *Gregory* was not the only one amongst those which the *Nazarenes* called the *Fathers*, who supported Errors directly contrary to right Reason, and dangerous to publick Tranquillity. *Austin*, a Man truly illustrious, and of a sublime and quick Wit, but vain, hasty, and of an extravagant Temper, wrote at first with Moderation and Prudence against the *Donatists*, who were his Adversaries; but at last, the Warmth of his Genius carried him away. From that Moment the Philosopher vanished, and the controversial Divine appeared in his true Light: He then began to maintain, loudly and openly, that it was necessary to persecute, destroy, and exterminate such as are called *Hereticks*; and for this Doctrine he justly deserves the Title of the *Patriarch of Persecutors*. He even dared to advance, that we are not bound to keep Faith with Hereticks, because all Things belong to the Faithful by divine Right; and there is nothing unto which Hereticks can have any legal Title. In this manner, this red-hot *African* established it as a Thing certain, that Contracts made by *Nazarenes* with Men of other Religions, were to continue in force till such Time only as they had the Power of violating them. How much more pure is the Morality of *Cicero*? *Fraud*, says the *Roman* Philosopher, *aggravates, instead of excusing Perjury* *.

It was not only in their religious Disputes, that the *Fathers*, or *Nazarene* Divines, subverted moral Principles; they sometimes abused certain Passages taken from our sacred Scriptures, in order to authorize their own erroneous Opinions. *Ambrose*, in explaining the Psalm, wherein *David* says that he had

* *Fraus enim adstringit, non dissolvit, Perjurium.* Cicero de Officiis, Lib. III. Cap. xxxii.

offended

offended against God alone*, takes Occasion from thence to set up a Principle the most absurd, and the most contrary to Humanity. He says expressly, that David did not sin against Uriah, when he caused him to be put in the Fore-front of the Battle, that he might fall; because Kings, being Masters of the Lives and Goods of their Subjects, may take them away when they think fit, without being guilty of any wrong, in respect to Men, on account of these Acts of Cruelty and Caprice†. Make this Principle agree, if you can, with the fierce and imperious Behaviour of this very Doctc towards the Emperor Theodosius, which the Nazarenes have however extolled beyond Measure, or with those outrageous Injuries, with which, without difficulty, he loaded Magnentius. This was far enough from corresponding with that excessive Power, which, in the before-cited Passage, he so liberally bestows on Kings. Can there be any thing more frightful, extravagant, or worthy of Punishment, than to assert, that a Prince, who takes away the Wife of one of his Subjects, and causes afterwards the innocent Husband to be put to death, sins only against God, and does no real Injustice towards him who is the Martyr of his Cruelty? To be sensible of the pernicious Consequences of an Opinion like this, one needs only reflect on the frightful Disorders which it must necessarily draw after it. There is, says the sage La Bruyere‡, a certain

* *Tibi soli peccavi, & malum coram te feci; &c.* Psalm, L. vers. 6.

† *Rex utique erat, nullis Legibus tenebatur, quia liberi sunt Reges à Vinculis Delictorum. Neque enim ullis ad Pœnam vocantur Legibus, tuti Imperii Potestate. Homini ergo non peccavit, cui non tenebatur obnoxius. Sed quamvis tutus Imperio, Devotione tamen ac Fide erat Deo subditus.* Ambrosii Apologia Davidiis, Cap. X.

‡ *Caractères ou Mœurs du Siècle, Tom. I. pag. 479.*

Com-

Commerce, or Exchange of Duties between Sovereigns and Subjects; which are the most difficult to perform, I determine not: This would be to judge, on the one side, of the strict Obligations to Respect, Duty, Fidelity, Obedience and Dependence; and on the other, as the indispensable Obligation of doing Justice, and acting beneficently, which belong to the Prince. To add to this, that he is absolute Master of the Goods of his Subjects, without regard, without account; I say, to add this, is running into the Notions of a Favourite, who would add any thing.

Behold, my Friend, a Morality quite different from that of *Ambrose*, which is so much the more surprising, because this slavish Submission was never insisted upon among the Pagans, the most devoted to despotick Government. So far were they from believing, that Kings were at Liberty to possess themselves of the Goods of their Subjects unjustly, and to take away their Lives at their Will, that *Herodotus* * informs us, the *Persians*, who were so submissive to their Princes, had amongst them a Law, by which their Kings were forbid to put a Man to death for a single Crime. By the same Law, great Lords were forbid to treat their Slaves rigorously for the first Fault. They were directed to consider, whether the Mischiefs they had done were greater than the Services they had rendered them; and in case they were, then it was allowed them to punish the Criminals as they thought fit.

What Difference, dear *Isaac*, between these wise and prudent Laws, and the Opinions of certain *Nazarene* Doctors? Is it not in truth amazing, that People, enlightened only by the weak Rays of Reason, and remaining as yet under the dark Cloud of Paganism, should have Ideas notwithstanding of a Morality much more wise and equitable, than that

* Herodot. Lib. I. pag. 67.

taught

taught by the wise Men and Priests among those who acknowledge the Spirituality and Unity of the Deity?

Some amongst these seem to be ignorant of the Laws even of good Manners, and at the same time incapable of being restrained by the most sacred Ties of Society. They have violated the Duties of Friendship; their Passions and their Prejudices have so blinded them, that they have thought it excusable to accuse and blacken, by the basest Calumnies, those with whom they have lived on the best Terms, and with whom they had no other Dispute than what was occasioned by some slight Difference as to certain Points of Doctrine. *Jerome*, a Man of a bold Genius, one who wrote a vehement Style, which, it must be owned, in Purity, comes little short of that of *Cicero*, falls without Mercy on his old Friend *Ruffinus*, because he had embraced the Opinions of *Origen*. The good Terms which they had lived in, and the intimate Friendship which had subsisted betwixt them for many Years, could not allay his Fury; he was forced to give way to his Choler, and let it empty itself in a Libel. Happy had it been for him, if he could have made use of the wise Lessons which a heathen Writer hath given the World on this Subject. I mean, if he had practised the sage Maxims delivered by *Cicero* in his Tract *de amicitia*; he would then, without doubt, instead of decrying *Ruffinus*, endeavour to convince him by fair Means, and by using the most gentle Methods.

True Tenderneſs hath no Taſte of Pleaſure, Satisfaction, or of Glory, if thoſe, in whom it has an Intereſt, take no part in them *. This delicate Sen-

* *Nec fas eſſe ullâ me Voluptate frui,
Decreui tantisper, dum ille abeſt meus
Particeps.*

Terent. Heaut. Actus I. Scena II.

timent

timent has been long out of the Heads of Divines, and controversial Writers. There is nothing they do not sacrifice to their Passions, and the moment any one of their Friends ceases to be of their Opinion, their Regard for him ceases also. Their Friendship is turned into Hate, and they offend alike against the Laws of Equity and the Rules of Decency. They would, if it depended upon them, exterminate, by Fire and Sword, all such as are guilty of the unpardonable Crime of being no longer their Slaves*. Unhappy Effects of the Weakness of those Principles, which make up that false and pernicious Morality that covers with an Appearance of Virtue those Errors which are most contrary to the publick Good, and most destructive of the Peace of civil Society.

If a true and wholesome Morality be known amongst the *Nazarenes*, they are indebted for it wholly to Laymen. *Grotius* and *Puffendorf* have

* The Ecclesiasticks have in all Ages found out fine Titles to gild their cruel Persecutions against their Enemies, or rather against those they did not like. "I shall bury in Silence, says a Bishop of the fifth Century, who was persecuted for Nestorianism, the Chains, Confinements, Marks of Infamy, Massacres worthy of Compassion, and of which the Enormity is such, that those who were Eye-witnesses of these Slaughters, scarce believe what they saw. All these Tragedies were acted by Bishops; amongst them Effrontery passes for a Mark of Courage, they call their Cruelty, Zeal, and their Fraud is honoured with the Name of Wisdom." Σιωπῶ τὰ δεσμὰς τὰ δεσμοτήρια, τὰς ζημίας, τὰς ἀτιμίας, τὰς μάστιγας, τὰ τῶν θόνων ἐλέεινα θεῶματα, καὶ μετὰ τὴν πείραν ἀνετὴν δὲ ὑπερβολὴν ἀσιγήνα, καὶ ταῦτα δραματουργεῖται διὰ πολλῶν ἱερέων ἡδρασύτη; ἀνδρεία νομόμειται, ἡ ὁμοτήτης ζήλο; ἀνομάσει, ὁ δόλο; σοφία λελογίζεται. *Etherius Tyrannorum Episcopus, inter Opera Theodopeti, Tom. V. pag. 688 & 689.*

done

done more Good to Mankind by their Writings, than all the Divines antient and modern. These sage Lawyers have gone up to the Fountain; they have examined with Care the Motives furnished by the Law of Nature. They have supported these by the Authorities of the first *Nazarene* Legislators, whom I have before recommended, in correcting the Abuses, and destroying the Errors which had been introduced by those Men who were desirous of establishing, as Points of Morality, whatever was dictated to them by their Caprice, their Hatred and their Ambition; they have shewn their Readers the naked Truth, which others had made it their Business to conceal. However, notwithstanding the Efforts they have made to become useful to all the World, they have hitherto been able to do but a Part of the Good they proposed. Too many Divines, zealous in supporting their own Errors, and those of their Predecessors, have done all they could; and are yet using their utmost Endeavours to discredit all Works, which teach a pure, simple and humane Morality, and which disapprove of all the Violences they would consecrate under the specious Pretext of Religion. *When the admirable Treatise of the Rights of War and of Peace, says Puffendorf*, first appeared, the Ecclesiasticks, instead of thanking the Author, rose up against him, one and all, and not only procured it to be put into the Index Expurgatorius, by the Popish Inquisition, at which one needs not be surprized, but also excited several Protestant Divines to write against, and to do their utmost to decry it. The same Practices were repeated on the publishing the Law of Nature and of Nations; the Jesuits at Vienna procured its Prohibition.*

* *Traité du Droit des Gens. Préface de Barbeyrac, page 22.*

Believe me, dear *Isaac*, that this outrageous Aver-
sion of the Divines towards all such as have attempt-
ed to support the Laws of Humanity, and to make
known its Duties to their Fellow-Citizens, is the
strongest Obstacle to sound Morality; insomuch
that one may safely say, that there is more Benefit to
be received by reading the Books left us by Pagan
Philosophers, than those of certain Doctors, who pass
notwithstanding for the great Oracles of Mankind.
Hapless are those Nations, who are unacquainted
with any other Moral System, than such an one as
is to be picked up out of Books approved by the *Span-
ish, Portuguese, and Italian* Inquisitors!

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, and address thy Prayers to
the supreme Being, that he would be pleased to open
the Eyes of all Mankind; for though we are *Jews*,
we ought notwithstanding to wish that the *Naza-
renes* knew and practised a more equitable Morality.
If the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese* would become Dis-
ciples of *Grotius* and *Puffendorf*, they would not
slaughter our Brethren in the iniquitous Manner
they do. May the God of our Fathers heap Bless-
ings upon thee.

London.



LETTER CLVII.

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at*
Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.

YOU are, without question, surprized, my dear
Monceca, at my Silence, and accuse me, I dare
say, of Laziness and Negligence; but you will
change

change your Opinion, when I tell you, that I have lately made a Voyage to *Jerusalem*. The Nearness of the holy City of *David*, the Desire I had of seeing that illustrious Capital of the Kingdom of our Ancestors, the Facility of satisfying my Curiosity, engaged me to lay hold of the Opportunity which offered, of making a Trip in a Vessel bound from *Alexandria* to *St. John d' Acre*.

It is impossible for me to express to you, my dear *Monceca*, the Agitations of Mind I felt in passing through *Palestine*. Joy, Grief, Pity, Anger, Respect, Spight; each of these Passions succeeded the other in my Heart, and sometimes rose there all at once. *Happy Place!* cried I, *where the God of Israel was served heretofore with such Splendor as his Worship deserved; have my Eyes the Pleasure of beholding thee? But, alas! in what State are thy Cities and Palaces, of which thou wert formerly full? I see nothing but Ruins, melancholy Remains, which have escaped the Cruelty, the Rage and Fury of our Enemies. Just and good God, to whom alone belongeth Vengeance, remember thy People!*

At these Words, my dear *Monceca*, my Eyes were filled with Tears; and though I disapprove the revengeful Temper of my Brethren, yet a holy Fury at that time seized me, and got the better of all my philosophical Reflections. I prostrated myself upon the Ground, and turning myself towards the Ruins of the Temple, from which I was not distant above fifteen Leagues; I there poured forth the Prayer which our Brethren use many times in the Year in their Synagogues.

Look down, O Lord! look down on the Evils which our Enemies do unto us. Remember thou the Cruelties of Nebuchadonasar, and those of Titus; and above all, O Lord, remember Adrian, the most cruel of all the Destroyers of our Nation, who erected shameful Statues

on thy Altar, and defiled thy holy City with Idolatry: Who razed and utterly destroyed nine hundred and fourscore Towns, and burnt four hundred and fourscore Synagogues*. My Grief grew still stronger, when I came to *Jerusalem*, and I felt my Heart pierced with a thousand Wounds, when I looked upon the Ruins of the Temple. The *Turks* have built a Mosque upon its outward Court, which is still paved with black and white Marble. In the middle, and where heretofore was the Holy of Holies, there is a *Mohammedan* Temple, covered with a grand Dome, supported with two Rows of Columns of Marble. In the midst of this Dome there is a large Stone, from which the *Turks* assure us *Mohammed* went up into Heaven.

Judge, my dear *Monceca*, of the Despair of a true *Israelite*, at the Sight of this infamous Edifice, raised on the Foundation of *Solomon's* Temple. The Grief, which I was unable to shake off, would not allow me to remain long at *Jerusalem*. Satisfied therefore with kissing the holy Earth, which our Posterity shall one Day purify from all the Impieties, and all the Abominations which our Enemies have committed there, I returned to *Cairo*, carrying with me a Box full of the precious Earth on which the Temple was built. I did this not in Imitation of the Superstition of the *Nazarenes*, who, because they have an infinite Respect for certain Places at *Jerusalem*, believe that there is something more in that Earth than in any other; but because I was

* There is in the *Jewish* Ritual a Hymn for the ninth Day of the Month *Ab*, in which we read these Words, *Recordare, Domine, qualis fuerit Adrianus, Crudelitatis Consilia amplexus, consuluit Idola se pervertentia, & sustulit combussitque quadringenta & octoginta Synagogas. Tractatus Talmudicus, Giffin dictus, apud Johan. à Lent, de Judæorum Pseudo-Messiiis, pag. 18.*

glad to have it by me as an efficacious Memorial of the Evils our Crimes have brought upon our Country, and that I might thereby be excited to be once more virtuous.

When I consider, dear *Monceca*, the Mischiefs our Fathers have suffered, I am inclined to believe that they were guilty of some prodigious Crimes, the Knowledge of which hath not reached us. Nay, I must own to you freely, that were I not most firmly persuaded of the Truth of our Religion, I should, on examining the Ills we have suffered since the Sects of the *Nazarenes* commenced, be led to believe the Prophecies were accomplished, and that the God of *Israel* having abandoned us his People, had made choice of some other.

Without staying to consider the first Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*, I run over in my Mind, with Astonishment and Horror, those Evils with which the *Jews* were overwhelmed by *Adrian*. After that cruel Emperor had slain *Barcokebas*, and taken the City of *Bitter*, the last Resource of *Israel*, he ordered the Image of a Hog, cut in Marble, to be placed on that Gate of *Jerusalem* which looks towards *Bethlehem*. He caused a Theatre, and various Temples to false Gods, to be erected with Stones collected out of the Ruins of the Temple of *Solomon*, and set up the Statue of *Jupiter* in the Place of the holy Sanctuary. He forbid the *Jews*, on pain of Death, to enter *Jerusalem*, and cut off the Ears of a Multitude, whom he caused to be transported into several Countries.

If the Miseries we daily suffer in *Spain* and *Portugal*, did not shew us too clearly how far the Malice of Men may extend, one could not give Credit to the Cruelties which our Authors assure us were exercised on our Nation by *Adrian* and his Soldiers. They say, that after the taking of *Bitter*, the Slaugh-

ter

ter was so great, and Rivulets of Blood ran with such Force, that they carried before them Stones of four Pounds Weight, and discoloured the Sea at a considerable Distance*. They tell us farther, that when the Romans had possessed themselves of this City, they drove all the Scholars into one Place, and there burnt them, with their Books; because at the beginning of the Siege these Youths had made use of their Pen-knives and Steel-pencils, to kill their Enemies†. Thus they made it a capital Crime for Persons to defend themselves when they were attacked. The Loss of Bitter was attended with the entire Dispersion of our Nation. The Ills we endured under Titus were but slight Things, compared to what we suffered under Adrian. He caused Numbers of Jews to be sold at Fairs, at the same Price with Horses; and sent Multitudes into Egypt, where they perished with Hunger, Thirst and Fatigue. Is it possible, dear Monceca, that God should expose a People to such Mischiefs, if their Crimes had not merited so rude a Chastisement? I cannot think but I am in the right to say, that our Authors have hid from us the true Causes why the Almighty thus abandoned his People to the Rage of their Enemies. Surely the Jews had committed some great Crimes against the Romans, with which the Deity was justly offended. Under colour of Religion perhaps they had committed Murders, and defiled themselves with the Blood of Innocents. We shall see some Cause to credit these Suspicions, if we give Credit to the Writings of a Nazarene Father, who lived within two Ages

* *Quinimo Sanguis rapiebat secum Petras Magnitudinis quadraginta Modiorum, donec ad quadraginta Milliaria usque in Oceanum fluere.* Lent, pag. 18.

† *Ista Pubes principio Hostes Impetum facientes Graphiis suis confodiebat. Cum verò hi prævalerent, Urbemque cepissent, involverunt Puerulos illos cum Libris suis, eosque Igne sic cremarunt.* Johan. à Lent, pag. 13.

after *Adrian*. By him we are informed, that the famous *Barcokebas*, the Author of the War made by the *Jews* against the *Romans*, was a celebrated Impostor, who plunged our Nation into an Abyss of Misery, out of which it has not delivered itself to this Day. This Wretch, who called himself the *Messiah*, made use of a Trick to breathe Fire and Smoke*, which is now common to our Jugglers. By this means he excited the *Jews* to revolt, and by an Excess of Fanaticism, scarce to be distinguished from Madness, he obliged all the *Jews* who came to serve in his Army, which became at length to be two hundred thousand strong, to cut off a Finger, as an Instance of their Courage. This Monster, born for the Destruction of his Brethren, seduced almost the whole Nation. They entered into his Views, shook off for a time the *Roman Yoke*, and, in Extenuation of their Revolt, and of these Murders, set up the most frivolous Pretext that ever was heard of. To this our Authors agree, and, by the Reasons they offer in defence of the *Jews* taking Arms, justify all the Cruelties of the *Romans*.

If we believe what is told us in the *Talmud*, the War against *Adrian* was occasioned by the putting several *Romans* to death most cruelly and unjustly. Therein we are told †, that it was a Custom among the *Jews*, for a Man to plant a Cedar when a Son was born unto him, and a Pine at the Birth of a Daughter; they made use of the Timber of these
Trees

* *Ut ille Barcokebas, Auctor Seditionis Judaicæ, Stipalam in Ore succensam. Anhelitu ventilabat, ut Flammas evomere videretur.* Hieronymi Apologia II. adversus Rufinum.

† *In More fuit ut cum nasceretur Infans plantarent Cedrum, cum Infantula Pinum: cumque Nati contraberent Matrimonium, ex iis conficerent Tbalamum. Die quâdam transfiliit Filia Cæsaris, & confractum est ei Crus Carpenis*

Trees for making the nuptial Bed, when those Children came to be established in the World at whose Birth they were planted: The Daughter of the Emperor *Adrian* passing through *Judea*, the Vehicle in which she was carried, broke down, and the *Romans* not knowing the Use to which those Trees were destined, cut down one of them to repair the Princess's Carriage; hereupon the *Jews* rose in an instant, and murdered all her Train, for daring to destroy a Tree they held sacred.

There can be nothing more ridiculous, or more false than this Story, since nothing is more certain than that the Emperor *Adrian* never had a Daughter. But admitting the Story to be true, did not our Ancestors deserve to be severely punished, for revolting on so slight an Occasion? Was it not a frightful Act of Barbarity to slaughter the Guards of a Princess, for a Thing of which they knew not the Consequences?

Without having Recourse to the chimerical Notions of the *Talmud*, let us, *Monceca*, freely own, that the Impostor *Barcokebas* prevailing on the mutinous Disposition of our Ancestors, drew upon them those Ills, by which they were crushed. Instead of thinking of the Mischiefs which fell upon them in the Days of *Titus*, and which ought to have served them for Warnings, they irritated the *Romans* by their Disobedience; and, by their Cruelties and Murders, offended God, in whom alone they ought to have put their Trust. It ought therefore to be fairly owned, that as never any People in the World suffered as we have done; so did there never exist

Carpenti Cedrum istiusmodi exciderunt, atque eam attulerunt. Insurrexerunt in eos Judæi, atque eos ceciderunt. Relatum est Cæsari rebellare Judæos. Profectus ille in eos iracundus excidit totum Cornu Israelis. Tractatus Talmudico-Babyl. Giffin dictus, folio 57. apud Johan. à Lent de Judæorum Pseudo-Messiiis, pag. 7.

any whose Cruelty, Pride, and Obstinacy, did so much merit to be abandoned by God. And which is still worse for us, most of the Crimes of our Nation have been committed through the Instigation of such as have pretended to defend Religion by committing them.

We ought to have our past Misfortunes everlastingly before our Eyes, in order to hinder our becoming Dupes to some new Impostor. Whenever the *Messiah* shall come to put an end to our Slavery, and to break our Chains in pieces, he will not need to direct us to dip our Hands in Blood. His Power alone will subdue the proudest Hearts, and his Will must suffice to do whatsoever he desires: To him nothing will be impossible; false Prophets and Impostors only found their Doctrine in the Destruction of a Part of Mankind. Is it not Madness and Folly to maintain, that God will send us a Deliverer, who shall authorize us to commit all sorts of Cruelties? Those who form such an Idea of the *Messiah*, make little Difference between him and a *Spanish* Inquisitor. Let us, *Monceca*, reject these idle Notions, and let us be assured, that our Deliverer, instead of lighting up new Disturbances in the World, will spread Peace and Tranquillity over all the Earth.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, form no Hopes but what are wise and worthy of the Saviour whom we expect.

Cairo.

LETTER



L E T T E R C L V I I I .

AARON MONCECA, *to* ISAAC ONIS,
Caraites, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople.

THE *Nazarenes*, dear *Isaac*, seem to have Reason for those Reproaches with which they load most of our Authors. They accuse them of having invented a thousand odious Stories injurious to their Legislator, and to have falsified ancient History with equal Ignorance and Malice. It is impossible for us to deny, that the *Jewish* Writers have given their Adversaries just Reason to make these Complaints. For without speaking of the gross Fables which are inserted in the *Talmud*, on purpose to hurt the Memory of *Jesus of Nazareth*, whose System of Morality is so pure, that no *Israelite* Philosopher can forbear admiring it; what Writings, big with Calumny, have not the *Rabbins* scattered abroad ever since the first Appearance of this Sect? I do not know, my Friend, whether a certain Book has fallen into your Hands, the Author of which lived about four or five hundred Years ago, but who has disguised himself as well as he could, with Intent to make his Work appear as if written shortly after the Death of the Legislator of the *Nazarenes*. This Fraud, however, is easily discovered, and may be clearly made out; so that the *Nazarenes*, far from fearing its Consequences, have themselves taken the pains to publish them: They have caused it to be printed, accompanied with such learned Notes, as

cover with Confusion, not only the Author of this fabulous Tale, but also our whole Nation; fond of Stories prejudicial to the *Nazarenes*, and incapable of distinguishing Truth from Falshood*. Those who adopt, without Examination, all the Calumnies that are published against our Adversaries, are not aware that in doing this they furnish them with Arms against themselves. Such as make use of their Reason, and who are not blinded with Prejudice, are filled with Indignation, when they see us reasoning on Facts notoriously false, and thenceforward give no sort of Credit to the Writings of a Man who blushes not at the advancing a notorious Falshood, of which he is at the Time he advances it perfectly convinced. This is the Reason that the Truth gains no Ground, but is in a manner obscured and buried under the Falsties which accompany it.

There can be nothing so horrid, dear *Isaac*, as the Impostures inserted in the Work of which I am speaking. When our *Rabbies* maintain the Legislator of the *Nazarenes* not to be the *Messias*, I look upon them as Men acting conformable to the Principles of their Religion; but when they invent the most atrocious Falshoods, I do not see how they are to be excused. It is a Truth of publick Notoriety, that *Jesus* of *Nazareth* was born of a Woman, whose Morals were perfectly pure. His Followers say, that this Woman conceived by the Operation of the Holy Spirit. The more moderate *Jews* content themselves with making him the Son of *Joseph* and

* The Title of this Work runs thus: ספר תולדות ישוע הנוצרי *Historia Jeschuzæ Nazareni, à Judæis blasphemè corrupta, ex Manuscripto hætenus medito nunc demum edita, ac Versione & Notis (quibus Judæorum Nequitiaè propiùs deteguntur, & Authoris Asserta Ineptiaè ac Impietatis convincuntur,) illustrata, à Johan. Jac. Huidrico Tigurino. Lugduni Batavorum, 1705. in 8va.*

Mary;

Mary; but the Author of this Manuscript hath published, with respect to his Birth, a Fable every way absurd.

According to him*, under the Reign of *Herod*, a certain Person, whose Name was *Papus*, the Son of *Jeh*, married a Woman whose Name was *Miriam*,

* *Ecco, Tempore Regni Herodis Profelyti, erat Vir quispam cui Nomen Papas F. Jeh. Huic Uxor erat Nomine Miriam, Filia Kalphus, Soror R. Simeonis Hakkalph. Erat autem illa Miriam (celebris illa) antequam in Matrimonium duceretur, Comptrix Capillorum muliebrum. Nupta illa erat Papo, juxta Legem Mosis & Israël, Formæque Speciositate supra alias eminebat. Oriunda ex Tribu Benjamin. Nec Maritus ejus Papus ei permittebat ex Ædibus egredi in publicum, sed Fores eum in finem clausas habebat: Suspiciabatur enim lascivos Homines (Formæ præstantiâ illectos) Rem fortè cum illâ habituros. Factum verò est, ut Die uno, quo Jejuniū Expiationum agitabatur, Fenestras ejus transiret improbus ille Joseph Pandira, Nazarenus, qui Formæ etiam Pulchritudine insignis erat. Is, cum animadverteret, Virum in Ædibus tunc nullum esse, elatâ voce inclamat: Miriam, Miriam, quo usque sedebis-seclusa? Prospectat illa de Fenestrâ, eique respondet: Joseph, Joseph, liberam me fac, sodes! It ergo Josephus, & adducit secum scalam, Miriam è Fenestrâ descendit, & fugiunt ambo Hierosolymâ Bethlehémam, ipso Expiationis Die Jejunió, ibique degunt Deibus multis nemini cogniti. Concubuit autem Josephus cum Miriam ipsâ Exp. Die, Feria esuriali. Conceptit illa, eique parit Anno vertente Jeschuum Nazarenum. Conceptit rursus, & peperit Filios Filiasque †.*

Hist. Jeschux, pag. 4 & 5.

† *Filios Filiasque*] Secundum Literam Nebulo intelligere petulanter voluit quæ in Evangelio memorantur de Christi Fratribus & Sororibus, *Math. xii. 46. xiii. 55, 56, &c.* Cum tamen nosse faciliè potuisset recutitus, Phrasi Heb. *Fratres* denotare quosvis propinqua Cognatione junctos, &c.

Huldrici Notæ in Hist. Jeschux, pag. 10.

the Daughter of *Calphus*, and Sister of *Rabbi Simeon Hakalf*. This *Miriam* was very handsome, and *Papus* her Husband very jealous. He therefore took care to have her shut up constantly. His Precautions, however, in the end proved fruitless. On a certain Feast-day, when this jealous Man was gone abroad, one *Joseph Pandira*, a *Nazarene*, came under the Window of *Miriam's* Room, and spoke to her thus: *Miriam! Miriam! how long will you continue thus imprisoned?* To which she answered, looking out of her Window, *Joseph! Joseph! deliver me, and I will go with thee.* *Joseph* went and brought a Ladder, and *Miriam* got out of the Window. They went then together to *Bethlehem*, and at the End of a Year *Miriam* bore *Jesus*, and afterwards many Sons and Daughters.

Can there be any thing more absurd, dear *Isaac*, than this odious, this infamous Falshood, to which the greatest Part of our own Authors give the Lye. This the able Editor of that Book hath made clearly appear in his Notes. He hath farther shewed, that the *Jewish* Author, in order to give an Air of Truth to his Fables, hath taken several things from the *Nazarene* Scriptures, and disfigured them to make them serve his Purpose. For Instance, in the Close of the last Passage, the Sons and Daughters are plainly copied from the Brethren and Sisters mentioned in the Gospels, though these Terms frequently signify no more than near Relations.

The Hatred of this *Jewish* Writer is not sufficiently glutted, by defaming the Legislator of the *Nazarenes* as to his Birth; he therefore proceeds to make him a Parricide, and his Fable on this Subject is more gross, and more ridiculous than the first. He tells us*, that finding himself slighted at *Nazareth*,

* *Accidit autem ut Jeshua, his visis, cognitoque spurium se esse, ac idcirca Noxâ (Calvitiis) à Sapientibus de honestatum,*

zareth, on account of his Birth, he went home to his Mother, pretending to have the Tooth-ach : He told her, that he had found in his Books an easy Remedy for his Pain, which consisted in holding the Nipple of her Breasts between his Teeth. The Mother no sooner consented, than he told her, he would never let go his hold, until she confessed to him the Truth of his Birth; which when she had done, he was so enraged, that he slew Joseph, and then retired into Galilee.

Is it possible, dear Isaac, that our Brethren the Jews should be so wanting to themselves, as not to stifle a Book filled with such evident Falshoods? Or how is it possible they could avoid seeing that, by suffering it to go abroad in the World, they should justify the Reproaches heaped upon them by the Nazarenes, as on Men void of all Regard either for

bonestatum, abierit Nazaretham, conveneritque Matrem suam, ibique ὀδονταλγία se graviter affligi simulans, Matri asseruerit, se cum Academicis Studiis incamberet, probatum contra Dentium Dolores Remedium audiuisse; illudque hoc esse, si Mater Afflicti Mammas immittat inter Januam Cardinesque medias, Dentibusque laborans eas exsugat, eum revaliturum. Respondit Mater (indulgentissime, Matique nihil suspicata) Agedum, Fili mi, ponam ego Mammas meas inter Cardines medias : Tu eas exsuge. Mater itaque Mammarum alteram interponit : Sed Jeshua Fores claudens, Mammas Maternas gravissime affligit, Matremque ita alloquitur : Non te prius dimitto, quā mihi edixeris, quā ratione in Lucem editus ego sim, & quæ Studia olim tua fuerint. Respondit ergo Mater : Spurius tu es. Maritus enim alter etiam mihi est, cui Nomen Papius. Progenitor autem tuus Joseph in Matrimonium me accepit, non accepto a legitimo Marito Divortii Libello. Omnes itidem Liberi mei reliqui Spurii sunt. Hæc cum percepisset, Jeshua Irâ excandescit, & abiens Patrem Josephum occidit : postea verò in Galilæam Judææ aufugit.

Hist. Jeshuæ, pag. 32 & 33.

Truth or Decency, when violating either of them will enable them to injure their Adversaries? When a Philosopher reads these Absurdities, and reflects that they are not only approved by the *Jews*, but maintained by them to be incontestible Truths; has he not a Right to conclude, that all our Authors in general are Cheats and Deceivers, and that such as give any Credit to their Works, are Creatures void of common Sense? Was there ever such a pitiful Tale as that of the Tooth-ach, and all its Consequences? I say nothing of the Death of *Joseph*, because that is a Fact to which not only all the *Nazarene* Authors give the Lye, but also all the Writings of our ancient *Rabbins*, who, amidst their most malicious Reproaches, never say a Word of this sort.

For my Part, I am no longer astonished, *Isaac*, at the Hatred the *Nazarenes* bear to us *Jews*. The Excess to which most of our Writers carry their Discourses, seem to me the just Cause thereof; and I am rather amazed, that, considering our Behaviour, they bear with us at all. I readily own one thing, that these ridiculous Tales, odious and infamous as they are, are properly treated by our Adversaries, who effectually revenge the flat Jests our Authors break upon them, by treating their Writings as they do with the utmost Contempt.

Before I finish this Letter, I must take notice of an Attempt made by this Author to ridicule a Miracle of the *Nazarene* Legislator. He went, says he*, with two of his Disciples to an Inn, and asking

* *Venerunt itaque inde in Diversorium. Quæ it ibi Jesus ex Hospite: Est-ne tibi unde hi edant? Respondit Hospes: Non mihi suppetit, nisi Anserculus unus affatus. Sumis ergo Jesus Anserem, illisque apponit, aiens: Anser hic exiguus nimis est, quàm ut a tribus comedi debeat. Dormitum eamus: & ille, qui somniarit Somnium optimum*

ing the Host if he had any thing to eat, he answered that he had only a Goose; whereupon turning to his Disciples, he said, This is too little for us all, let us go to our Rest, and he that has the best Dream, let him eat it when he awakes. They did so; but in the Night *Jehuda* arose, and eat the Goose. When Day broke, *Peter* said, I dreamed I sat on the right Hand of the Son of God. I am he, said his Master, and I dreamed thou didst sit at my right Hand; mine therefore is the better Dream. But *Jehuda* said, I dreamed that I eat the Goose. Hereupon they began to look for it; but in vain, *Jehuda* had really eat it.

A Nurse does not quiet her Child with such simple Stuff as this. Such low, such pitiful Absurdities, were reserved for the last Shifts of the *Jews!* Have not the *Nazarenes* all the Reason in the World, rather to scorn and despise these mean, malicious Efforts of our Spight, than to be angry or in any degree vexed at them? Let us pray to the sovereign Being, dear *Isaac*, that he would enlighten the Minds of all *Israelites*, teach them to despise these Fables, and not to attempt to outface Truth, by coining such evident and absurd Rhapsodies of Error and Imposture.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, live content and happy.

London.

mum comedet Anserem solus. Decumbunt igitur. Tempestâ verò Nocte surgit Jehuda, & Anserem devorat. Mane itaque illis surgentibus, Petrus ait: Somnio mihi visus fui assidere Solio Filii Dei Schaddai: Jesus ait, Ego sum Filius ille Dei Schaddai, & somniavi te prope me sedere. Ecce ergo me præstantius quid somniasse te. Quare meum erit Anserem comedere. Jehuda tandem aiebat: Ego quidem ipsemet in Somnio comedi Anserem. Querit ergo Anserem Jesus, sed frustra; Jehuda enim devorabat illum.

Hist. Jeschuzæ, pag. 51.



L E T T E R C L I X.

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraites*, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.

I AM perfectly well acquainted, dear *Monceca*, with the Book you mentioned in your last Letter. It is one of those pitiful Performances which have sprung from the *Rabbies*, and is as dishonourable to *Judaism*, as that wretched Collection of Fables and Visions, the *Talmud*. By embracing the wise System of the *Caraites*, I am no longer obliged to pay any Regard to these fictitious Writings, dictated by Spleen, and which Passion and Prejudice have consecrated to the Service of Religion, or rather have veiled themselves under the specious Pretence of doing Religion Service.

The Passages you have cited from the pretended History of *Jesus of Nazareth*, are far from being the most ridiculous things in that Collection. Behold one, which in my Judgment exceeds in Absurdity whatever has been written in that kind*.

Jehuda,

* *Jehuda* verò clanculum se ad Regem confert, eique nunciat, *Jesus* cum suis esse in *Ædibus Puræ*. Mittit ergo Rex juvenes Sacerdotes in *Ædes Puræ*, qui cum illic venissent ad *Jesus* aiunt: Homines nauci non sumus, & in te ac Verba tua credimus. Tantum nobis da, ut coram Facie nostra Miracula patres. Patravit itaque *Jesus* coram iis Mira, per Nomen immensum. Ederunt autem *Jesus* & Discipuli ejus ipsâ Die Expiationum, *Feria*

Jehuda, says that Author, went to the King privately, and told him that *Jesus* was arrived. That Prince sent the young Priests to meet him, and they said to *Jesus*, We are neither Deceivers nor wicked Persons; we give Credit to your Discourse. All that we desire is, that you would do before us some Miracle. *Jesus* yielded to their Request, and by virtue of the all-powerful Name of God, did, in their Sight, many Wonders. Now *Jesus* and his Disciples did not observe the Fasts appointed even on the most solemn Occasions. On the great Day of Expiation they drank Wine mingled with the Waters of Oblivion, and went to sleep their Senses in Sleep. But in the Night, Soldiers surrounded the House wherein they were, and bound them. *Jesus* did all he could to recollect the all-powerful Name, but he could not The Soldiers then conducted him

riâ Esuriali, nec jejunarunt. Biberunt etiam de Vino, quod miscuum erat Aquis Oblivionis, cubitumque postea iverunt. Circa tempeſtam verò Noctem, Satellites Regis ad ejus Mandatum Aedis Puræ Corona circumdant. Aperit Puræ Januam: ingrediuntur Satellites Conclave Jeſu & Affeclarum ejus, eoſque Compedibus conſtringunt. Jeſus itaque intendebat Animum in Nomen immenſum, ſed non valebat illud aſſequi, omnium enim ejus Connexionum oblitus erat. Tunc dixit Jeſus: De me dictum eſt; Vinum eſ Muſtum, &c. (Hoſ. iv. 11.) Satellites autem Jeſum & Affeclas abducunt in Carcer, dictum Domus Blaſphemantis, quia Probris & Blaſphemiis affecit Deum. Manè itaque Regi nunciabatur Jeſum & Sequaces ejus captos eſſe, et Carceri incluſos. Præcepit verò Rex, cuſtodire eoſ uſque ad Feſtum Tabernaculorum. Veniebat tunc omnis Populus Domini, ad ſe proſternandum coram Domino in Feſto, juxta id quod præceperat Moſes. Juſſit ergo Rex lapidare Jeſu Diſcipulos extra Hieroſolymam, & viderunt omnes Iſraelitæ, & Lapidibus obruerunt Sequaces Jeſu. Univerſus autem Iſrael Cantica & Laudes deſerebat Deo Iſraeli, quòd Viros hoſce Belial in Manus eorum tradiderit.

Hiſt. Jeſchuæ, pag. 67, 68, & 69.
and

and his Disciples to a certain Prison, called the House of Blasphemy, because they had blasphemed God. In the Morning therefore it was told the King, that Jesus and his Followers were apprehended. The King gave Directions thereupon, that they should be kept close Prisoners until the Feast of Tabernacles, when, as the Law of Moses directs, all the People came to assemble before the Lord. Then the King gave Command that Jesus's Disciples should be carried out of Jerusalem, and stoned; which was executed before the Eyes of all Israel, who sang Songs of Joy, and rendered Glory to God, for having enabled them to punish thus these wicked Men.

Without animadverting, dear *Monceca*, on the numerous Falsities and notorious Blunders in this Passage, which are so easily and effectually destroyed, not only by the *Nazarene*, but also by our own Historians, give me leave to mark out an evident Absurdity which every unlearned Reader must discern. If the Disciples of *Jesus* were stoned about the Feast of *Tabernacles*, and himself crucified some small time after without ever coming out of Prison; how came the Sect of the *Nazarenes* to spread, and to become so powerful? Who were they who went to propagate its Doctrines into the most distant Climates? How, being thus destroyed in the Beginning, came it to spring again out of its Ashes? The Rabbinical Historian foresaw some of these Difficulties, and endeavoured to provide against them, but in as lame a manner as if he had drank some of his own Waters of Oblivion, which hindered *Jesus* from recollecting the all-powerful Name. Is it not an incontestible Method of proving Facts, to ground the Evidence produced in their favour, on poetical Pagan Fictions, and the Dreams of the Cabalists, the greatest Fools in the whole World? For there, *Monceca*, amongst these worthy People must we find the Sources of this Water of Oblivion, which never swelled

swelled any Streams but those of *Lethe*, and that boundless Power of the ineffable Name, which indeed has had the Power of turning the Heads of innumerable Cabalists past all Recovery.

This Man, whose Writings you contemn so much, ought, in my Opinion, to hold the supreme Rank among worthless Authors, for I think verily none of his Brethren ever came up to what he has written concerning the Establishment of *Nazarenism* after the Death of *Jesus* *. “ It came to pass, “ *says he*, that the Inhabitants of *Ai* having heard “ that *Jesus* was crucified, had a sharp Dispute “ with the *Israelites*. They slew all they could “ meet with, and having murdered upwards of two “ thousand, the *Israelites* durst no longer go up to “ the Temple on the appointed Feasts. The King “ therefore made War upon the Inhabitants of *Ai*, “ but he found it impracticable to subdue them. “ There were however, at this time, in the City, a “ great number of seditious Spirits, Lovers of Novelties and prone to Insurrections. Some of these “ unquiet

* *Factum verò est, cum inaudirent Aitae suspensum esse Jeschu, at Litem indicerent acerbam Israeli. Quando ergo offenderunt Aitae Israelitam, eum Neci dederunt; & occisa ita sunt Israelitarum bina millia Virorum. Nec poterant Israelitae adscendere in Festum, propter Viros Ai: Bellum igitur gerebat Rex cum Aitis. Sed eosdem subigere non valebat. Nam ipsis cum Hierosolymis incresebat Numerus Hominum improbissimorum coram Rege. Quidam autem illorum Hominum Propudia Ai ibant, Mendaciaque Aitis referebant, scilicet triduo postquam suspensus fuisset Jeschu Ignem de Cælo cecidisse, Jeschu circumcinxisse, indeque illum è Vestigio revixisse, posteaque in Cælum ascendisse. Fidem vero adhibebant Aitae Verbis Scelestorum illorum, & Jurisjurandi Fide interpositâ conspirabant & Crimen ulturos in Israelitis, cujus Reatum sibi consciverant Jeschu suspendendo. Jebuda autem cum videret horrenda Aitae*

“ unquiet People found means to confer with cer-
 “ tain Persons who dwelt in *Ai*, and told them a
 “ thousand Fables. They said, that three Days
 “ after the Death of *Jesus*, Fire fell from Heaven,
 “ surrounded his Body, restored him to Life, and
 “ that he afterwards ascended to Heaven. The
 “ Inhabitants of *Ai* giving credit to all that they
 “ were told, became more and more determined
 “ to revenge on the *Israelites* the Death of *Jesus*,
 “ whom they thought unjustly crucified. *Jehuda*
 “ knowing the Dispositions of the Citizens of *Ai*,
 “ wrote to them to dissuade them in these Terms :
 “ *The Peace of God rests not on the impious ; why*
 “ *then do the People suffer themselves to be deluded*
 “ *with Lyes ? Come to Jerusalem, and bury your sup-*
 “ *posed Prophet, &c.* Hereupon the Inhabitants of
 “ *Ai* sent Deputies to *Jerusalem*, who were shewn
 “ the Body of *Jesus* where it was interred. These
 “ Deputies returning to the City, instead of giving

Aitas Facinora moliri, ad eos Literas in hunc Sensum de-
dit. Non est Pax, ait Dominus, Impiis. Quare con-
spirant Gentes, & Nationes mediantur Vanitatem ? Ve-
nite, quæso, Hierosolymam, & conspiciate Pseudo-Prophe-
tam vestrum. Ecce enim ille est cadaver protritum, Ca-
nis mortuus & foetidus, quem deposui ego in Recondito-
rio Stercorum ! Inutiles ergo illi Homines, cum haec per-
ciperent, Hierosolymam pergunt, ibique vident Jesum depo-
situm in Loco Sordibus & Stercoribus inquinatissimo. Re-
cipientes autem se in Ai, divulgant ibi pura Mendacia
esse, quæ transcripserit Jehuda. Nam ecce (Aiebant) ve-
nimus nos Hierosolymam, & plures ibi sunt qui contra
Regem insurrexerunt, eumque expulerunt, quodd noluerit
credere in Jesum : Multi quoque Sapientum occisi sunt
ob ipsam etiam Infidelitatem in Jesum. Aitæ itaque
credebant Verbis mendacibus Hominum nauci, Bellumque
indicebant Israel.

Hist Jeschuæ, pag. 95, 96, 97.

“ glory

“ glory to the Truth, affirmed all that was con-
 “ tained in *Jehuda's* Epistle to be notorious Lyes and
 “ Falshoods ; as also that Numbers, in *Jerusalem*
 “ itself, were come over to *Jesus*, and had revolted
 “ against the King. On this News the People of
 “ *Ai* cut the Throats of many wise Citizens who
 “ had been Enemies to *Jesus*, and continued the
 “ War as vigorously as ever against the *Israelites*.”

Behold, *Monceca*, a Series of Facts, of which no
 other Author, Pagan or Christian, ever spake a
 Word. It is really matter of Surprize, how a Per-
 son ever so well trained to lying, could, without
 blushing, give such a Romance as this to the World
 as true History. This *Rabbi* ought at least to have
 given some Appearance of Truth to his Fictions.
 There never was any thing so ill contrived, so in-
 connected, or so contradictory, as to say, that the
 Disciples of *Jesus* were stoned ; that the Inhabitants
 of *Jerusalem* were pleased therewith ; that People
 from *Ai* came and saw the dead Body of *Jesus* ; and
 yet that these very People should fight most zealously
 in his Quarrel. Have not the *Nazarenes* all the
 Reason in the World to treat our *Rabbies* as a Crew
 of Impostors, and to decry *Judaism*, because built
 upon their Writings, and consequently resting on a
 wretched Mass of Lyes, ridiculous Fictions, and
 groundless Calumnies ?

If all our Brethren of the House of *Israel* were
 of the same Disposition with the *Caraites*, they
 would not stand in fear of any such Reproaches.
 Our Faith is grounded solely on the sacred Scrip-
 tures. Our Oracles alone are infallible, and there-
 fore we are never deceived. In order to defend our
 Cause against the Christians, we are not obliged to
 have recourse to Frauds unworthy of an honest Man.
 They attack us from the Scriptures, and in the same
 Scriptures we find Matter for our Defence. If they
 could

could once prove to our Satisfaction the Prophecies to be accomplished, we should readily go over to their Faith. But we do not conceive this possible, that the great Lamp of *Israel* should as yet have shined amongst us. When he shall appear, his Light shall be visible unto all. It will be to no purpose to shut our Eyes. His Rays will pierce through the thickest Darkness; and therefore we ought not to suppose the *Messiah*, coming to free all the *Jews*, should leave the greatest Part of them in Ignorance and Blindness.

This, dear *Monceca*, is the capital Argument against the *Nazarenes*. They say the *Messiah* is come. What good has he done the *Jews*? For from them, and for them, the Scriptures say he was to come into the World. However, all sorts of Mischiefs have fallen on our Nation. We are all driven from *Jerusalem*. The Temple of the living God is destroyed. Sacrifices are no longer offered. We are a Prey to the Malice, Hatred, and Cruelty of all Nations. Are these the Blessings promised on the Coming of the *Messiah*? Is this the shining Star which was to illuminate *Israel*, which was to bring us Prosperity without End? Our Miseries prove but too strongly, that our Redeemer is not come. When he shall truly appear, the *Nazarenes* themselves will easily know him by the Favours which he will bestow upon us. He shall lead us forth out of Slavery, and our Liberty, our Glory, our good Fortune, shall become such shining Evidences, as to convince even the most obstinate and the most infatuated of our Enemies.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, live content and happy, and depend on my giving you, in my next, some farther Remarks on the impertinent Work of this Rabbinical Impostor.

Cairo.

LETTER



L E T T E R C L X .

ISAAC ONIS, *Caraite, formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA.*

I Promised you, dear *Monceca*, to write to you once again, on the Head of the Absurdities and Falsities which the Rabbins have inserted in the Life of the Legislator of the *Nazarenes*. I shall begin with a Passage which follows that I copied in my last, and which the shameless, ridiculous Historian continues in these Terms *.

“ The

* *Rex ergo & Sapientes perspicientes, Aïtas Israelitis superiores evadere, & adaugeri etiam Agmen Hominum impiissimorum, (erant hi Fratres & Cognati Jesu,) Consilia invicem ineunt Jebudamque rogant, quid optimum Factu in Re difficili sibi videretur? Respondit Jebuda: Ecce Avunculus Jesu est Simeon Hakkalph, qui itidem est Senex venerabilis admodum. Tradite, sultis, ei Nomen Immensum, & ablegate illum Aï, ibi ut patret Miracula, Civibusque edicat, omnia illa se facere על דעת ישן. Aïtæ vero opiniabuntur, dicere illum velle בשם ישן, in Nomine Jesu; cum Explicatio tamen Vocularum על דעת ambigua sit, atque adeo apta nata ad decipiendos illa Aïtas: nam על דעת (quod notare etiam potest ex Mente Jesu, in Nomine Jesu,) Stylo Rabbinico est לשון אנום, Phrasis quæ exprimit Actum, quem coactus quis & invitus ob urgentem Necessitatem suscipit. Viri verò Aïtæ credent Verbis Simeonis, Avunculus Jesu cum sit. Oportet autem persuadeat Simeon illis, in Mandatis ei dedisse Jesum edicere iis ne belligerarent cum Israelitis, cum*

“ The King and the Wisemen about him, ob-
 “ serving that the *Aitans* grew every Day more
 “ powerful, and that the Number of Innovators
 “ and impious Persons encreased continually,
 “ among whom the Relations of *Jesus* eminently
 “ distinguished themselves, deliberated seriously
 “ what Measures it became them to take; inviting
 “ *Jehuda* to Council, and intréating him to give
 “ his Advice freely. To which *Jehuda* answered
 “ thus: Behold Simeon Hakkalph, Uncle to Jesus.
 “ He

cum *Jesus* ipsemet Vindictam de illis sumpturus esset. *Approbabat se hoc Consilium Regi & Sapientibus. Accersunt itaque Simeonem, illique Rem totam enarrant. Respondit Simeon: Jurate mihi sanctè, Hæredem me futurum Seculi venturi. Tunc ibo ego lubens, illisque proponam Statuta non bona, atque cessare faciam Bellum ab Israël. Jurans proinde Sapientes & Seniores Simeoni, eique committunt Nominis Immenfi Arcanum sacratissimum.*

Abiit ergo Simeon, & cum prope jam Ai esset, effinxit Nubeculam aliquam minorem; Tonitribusque & Fulgetris inde emissis, ipse Nubeculæ insedit, Mugituque Tonitru, quo Aitas percelleret, edito, in hæc Verba fari cæpit: Audite, viri Aitæ. Convenite ad Turrim Aiticam, & ibi præscribam vobis Statuta Jeschû. Aitæ, Voce hac auditâ perterriti, undique ad Turrim istam concurrunt. Et ecce Simeon fertur supra Nubem. Descendit vero postea de Nube in Turrim; & viri Aitæ se coram eo prosternunt. Dicit autem Simeon: Ego sum Simeon Hakkalph, Avunculus Jeschu. Jesus vero convenit me, meque ad vos amandavit, ut edocerem vos Statuta ejus; nam Jesus Filius Dei est. Ego porro Simeon edocebo vos Legem Jesu, Statuta nova. Edidit vero Simeon in Conspectu eorum Signa & Portenta magna. Aitæ Proin Verbis Simeonis Fidem adhibuerunt, eique dixerunt: Faciemus, & obsequemur omni, quod præcepturus es nobis. Simeon ait: Recipite vos in Aedes vestras. Omnes ergo Aitæ Aedes suas repetunt. Simeon autem in Turri Aitica residebat, & conscribebat Statuta illa, prout ei edixerant Rex & Sapientes.

“ He is a most venerable old Man. Discover to him
 “ all the Mysteries and all Properties of the All-
 “ powerful Name. When you have done all this, let
 “ him go immediately to the Citizens of Ai; let him
 “ perform before their Eyes Signs and Wonders; and
 “ let him say, These Things I do by the Power of An-
 “ other. The People of that City will undoubtedly
 “ believe he does all this by the Power of Jesus; the
 “ Phrase being exactly calculated to deceive them. For
 “ these Words, By the Power, or through the Vir-

*Sapientes. Immutabat etiam Alphabetum, aliisque Lite-
 ras Nominibus insigniebat, ad dandum tacite Indictum,
 omnia quæ præcepturus erat Mendacia fore. Hoc vero
 Alphabetum est quod ille cudit: a, be, ce, de, e, ef, cha,
 i, ke, el, em, en, o, pe, ku, er, es, te, w, icx, etzet,
 zet. Et hæc Explicatio ejus: אבא Pater meus est E-
 sai, עיר וציד Venator, & lassus ille erat: & ecce Filii
 ejus credunt in Jesum, qui חי כאלו vivit ut Deus. Sus-
 focetur Anima illorum; quia Deo אין אם non est
 Mater, Jesus vero habebat Matrem: sed אפיקורוס
 Epicureus, Seducitor, &c.*

*Conscripsit insuper in Usus illorum Libros mendacissimos,
 eosque vocavit עון בליוך, Iniquitatem Consumptionis.
 Putaverunt vero illi, eum dicere אבן בליון q. d. Pater,
 & Filius, & manifestatus Spiritus S. Et conscripsit illis
 etiam Libros Nomine Discipulorum Jesu, & speciatim Jo-
 hannis: Dixit vero Jesum omnia illa sibi tradidisse. Nec
 absque Intentione singulari concinnavit Librum Johannis.
 Illi proin putabant Mysteriorum ea esse, cum tamen omnia illa
 non sint nisi Vanitas, & Figmentum Cordis: uti quæ (v. g.)
 scripsit in illo Libro Johannis, cap. xiii. Johannem vidisse
 Bestiam aliquam, cui fuerunt septem Capita, & decem
 Cornua, cum decem etiam Coronis; Nomenque Bestiæ
 est Nomen blasphemix, & Numerum Nominis Bestiæ
 esse 666. Hic Verborum Sensus est: Bestia hæc est Jeschu
 Nazareus: Ei sunt septem Capita, tot nimirum Literæ
 sunt in binis Vocabulis hisce ישו בצרי, &c.*

Hist. Jeschuæ, pag. 100—115.

“ tue

" tue of Another, imply, in the Rabbinical Style,
 " acting by Constraint, and; as it were, under the
 " Direction of Another. Beyond all doubt, the Citi-
 " zens of Ai will give entire credit to what Simeon,
 " the Uncle of Jesus, shall say to them; and then he
 " must persuade them, that it is the Will of Jesus
 " they should cease to persecute the Israelites, because
 " he would revenge himself in an exemplary manner.
 " The King, and all the Wifemen who were with
 " him, approved the Advice given by Johada.
 " They sent instantly for old Simeon, and declared
 " to him all they had resolved upon. Swearing to me,
 " said he, that I shall never suffer Reproach here-
 " after, on account of what you command me, and I
 " shall obey you in all Things with Pleasure. I will
 " lead your Enemies into criminal Opinions, and will
 " engage them to put an end to the War they carry on
 " against you. The Wisemen and Elders swore
 " then to Simeon, as he had desired, and revealed
 " unto him the Mysteries of the All-powerful
 " Name.

" He set out immediately, and when he came
 " into the Neighbourhood of Ai, he formed a thick
 " dark Cloud, whence Lightnings played conti-
 " nually. He placed himself thereupon and spoke
 " thence to the People thus: Hear me, ye Inhabi-
 " tants of Ai, call an Assembly at the Foot of the
 " Tower, and I will inform you of the Commands of
 " Jesus. The Inhabitants, extremely frightened,
 " ran together in Crowds. Simeon riding on his
 " Cloud, came also unto the same Place, and de-
 " scended at last on the Tower. The Citizens of
 " Ai prostrated themselves at his Feet; and he
 " then spake to them after this manner: I am Si-
 " meon Hakkalph, Uncle to Jesus, who came to me
 " lately, and sent me unto you, to inform you of
 " his Will; he is the Son of God, and I will teach
 " you

“ you his Law. Then did he many strange Mi-
 “ racles; insomuch that the Inhabitants of *Ai* be-
 “ lieved him, and said, *We will obey you in what-*
 “ *ever you command; and whatever you direct us,*
 “ *that will we do.* Simeon thereupon ordained, that
 “ they should retire to their Houses; while he,
 “ remaining in the Tower, compiled wicked and
 “ prejudicial Laws, according as he had promised
 “ the King and the Elders. He changed likewise
 “ the Alphabet, and gave new Names to the Let-
 “ ters, to serve as a secret Index, that all he taught
 “ them was Lies and Impostures. Now the Al-
 “ phabet he invented ran thus: *a, be, ce, de, e,*
 “ *ef, cha, i, ke, el, em, en, o, p, qu, er, ess, te,*
 “ *u, icx, etzet, zet.* Of which this is the Expli-
 “ cation: *My Father was Esau the Hunter, and he*
 “ *was faint, &c.* He composed also many Books
 “ in the Names of the Disciples of *Jesus*; and par-
 “ ticularly, the Revelations in the Name of *John,*
 “ &c.”

Do you think, dear *Monceca*, that among the
 Tales of the Fairies, there is any thing more ridi-
 culous than this Tale of *Hakkalph*? Is it possible
 for Man to devise a more monstrous or more ab-
 surd Story than the extravagant Fiction of the Law,
 given from an high Tower by a Person riding thi-
 ther on a Cloud. The Oath he exacted of the El-
 ders, that the Fraud he used against the Dwellers in
Ai should not prejudice his Salvation, and their Pro-
 mise thereupon, is it not wounding all Morality to
 the Quick? Where is, I will not say the honest
 Man, but where is the Villain, who will dare to
 maintain, that it is lawful, under colour of serving
 any Religion, to deceive a whole People, and per-
 suade them to commit the g eatest Crimes, under
 colour of obeying the Will of God?

This Rabbinical Historian had Notions no way reconcileable to Equity or right Reason. It seems that he was as much a Cheat as a Liar; and that he approved, in his Heart, any sort of Frauds which might turn to Advantage. Of this, nothing can be a stronger Instance than the following Passage, in his own Words *. “ Rabbi AK, says he, “ went to Nazareth, and informed himself where “ Mezaria, the Wife of Karchat, dwelt. As soon “ as he knew it, he transported himself thither, “ and found Miriam all alone, her Husband being “ gone abroad. Daughter, said he, it is by the special Favour of Heaven that I have found you alone, “ your Husband being abroad. I conjure you to tell “ me truly your Adventures; and if you inform me “ justly, I promise you everlasting Happiness. Rabbi “ AK, also to satisfy her, gave her his Oath; but

* R. AK igitur Nazaretham it, exque Incolis Urbis in-
 quirit, ubinam habitet Mezaria, Conjugio juncta cum
 Karchat. Monstrans indigenæ Rabbino Edes, quæ cum
 audisset AK, non offendit ibi Maritum, sed Uxorem so-
 lam; illam itaque ita affatur: Filia mea, singulari Do-
 mini Providentiâ effectum est quod Maritus tuus Domi-
 ni non sit. Ego itaque te per Dominum Deum Cælorum
 adjuro, ut edicās mihi, quæ Studia tua, & sint, & fue-
 rint olim; tibi que (fideliter Gesta narranti) spondeo Se-
 culum futurum. Respondit ei Uxor: Jura, quæso, mihi
 per Nomen Domini. Juszurandum confessum præstat
 R. AK, One suo, sed Corde illud nullum facit. Tunc
 Uxor ita ad eum loquitur: Miriam ego sum, Soror Sime-
 onis Hakkalph, Uxor Papi. Aufugi verò cum Jose-
 pho Pandira, & procreavit ille ex me Liberos spurios
 Bethlehemæ. Eo autem Tempore, quo Herodes illuc
 venit nos lapidaturus, in Ægyptum fugimus. Ibi cum
 ingravesceret Annona, huc revertimur, Nômina que
 nostra immutamus, ne noscerent nos Homines. Hæc
 cum audisset R. AK, Vestes laceravit eique ita edixit, &c.
 Hist. Jeschuæ, p. 24 & 25.

“ it

“ it was Lips only swore, and he promised nothing
“ in Heart. Then the Woman, to whom he
“ spake, answered: *I am Miriam, Sister to Simeon*
“ *Hakkalph, &c.* Rabbi Ak having heard all her
“ Story, rent his Clothes, &c.”

Behold, dear *Monicca*, in this Rabbi Ak a most extraordinary Person. He makes no sort of Difficulty of swearing falsely, and of invoking the holy Name of God, to give Weight to his abominable Lies. He tears his Clothes, however, at the News told him by *Miriam*; as if Adultery was a greater Crime than premeditated Perjury. But a Man, like this worthy Writer, seldom examines nicely what he delivers. How should we expect any thing wise or sage from so great a Fool, so mere a Beast as this ignorant Rabbi?

I will conclude this Letter with a comick and most extravagant Adventure of some of the Disciples of *Jesus*, which this wise Author thus gravely sets down: “ *Simeon Hakkalph*, says he, went to the
“ King, and said, that if he would give him leave
“ to act as he thought fit, he would presently destroy all the Followers of *Jesus*, who were in
“ the City of *Jerusalem*. The King answered, *I*
“ *give you my Consent; go, and the Lord be with you.*
“ Then *Simeon* went to the Innovators, and said,
“ *Come, let us go to Ai; there you shall see the Signs and*
“ *Wonders I have done by the Power of Jesus, and*
“ *those which I am yet to perform.* Numbers therefore of these impious Persons took the Road to
“ *Ai*, as he directed, and others rode with him in
“ a Cloud. But as they went thither, *Simeon*
“ pushed them out of the Cloud, and threw them
“ on the Ground, where they lay slain. *Simeon*
“ returning thereupon to *Jerusalem*, told the Adventure to the King, which gave him great Plea-

“ sure; and thenceforward *Simeon* never stirred
“ from the Court of that Prince*.”

I would ask you, dear *Monceca*, did I wrong, to embrace the prudent Sentiments of the *Caraites*, and ought I to have rested in a Sect, the principal Doctors whereof espouse such absurd Impertinencies? If one studied to invent a Fable, capable of turning a whole Work into Ridicule, could one have succeeded better than this Rabbi? I do not believe, that in all *Ariosto*, there is a more whimsical Vision than this of carrying Men, whom we would destroy, into the Air in a Cloud, and then breaking their Necks from thence. A Person vested with such Powers, who knew not how to open new Roads through the Air, did he stand in need of such an extraordinary Expedient as this, to put such Criminals to Death? He might questionless have punished them in a common Method, he who had such Gifts, and not have troubled himself to carry Folks along in a Cloud; and then hazard the laming some honest Man, by throwing him down on his Head. Surely, surely, my Friend, none

* *Tum Simeon Hakkalaph adit Regem, aitque: Domine Rex, concede mihi, & removebo ego nequissimos hos Homines ex Hierosolymis. Respondit Rex Simeon: Vade; Dominus tecum sit, Simeon ergo, clanculum se ad Nebulones conferens, iis ait: Surgite; ascendamas Ai, & ibi videbitis Prodigia, quæ ego edidi על רעה Jesu, quæque insuper facturum ibi sum. Quidam igitur Hominum turpissimorum Ai eunt. Quidam etiam Nubi juxta Simeonem impositi Hierosolymam linquunt. In Itinere vero contigit ut Simeon Nube uestus decerneret in Terram illos dejicere; & ceciderunt Homines illi nullius Frugi de Nube, ac moriuntur. Simeon vero, Hierosolymam repetens, Regi Negotium enarrat, Rexque de eo gavisus est. Ex eâ vero die, & postea, non recessit Simeon ex Aula Regis usque ad mortem suam. Hist. Jeschuzæ, p. 125, 126.*

but

but a Rabbi would ever have been such a Visionary, as to think of raining Men.

Farewell, live content and happy, and may the great God cover thee with Prosperities, give thee perfect Health, and the Victory over all thy Enemies.

Cairo.

would destroy, into the Air in a Cloud, and breaking their Necks from thence. A new Road through the Air, did he stand in of such an extraordinary Expedient as this, to lead Criminals to Death? He might question have punished them in a common Method, he had such Gifts, and not have troubled himself carry Flocks along in a Cloud; and then having slain some honest Man, by throwing him down on his Head. Surely, surely, my Friend, not

EXXIX
* Tum Simon Hark...
Rex, concede mihi, & ego nequissimos
Homines ex Hierosolymis...
de; Dominus tecum sit, Simon ergo, clanculum se
Nebulones confert, in aus surgit; ascendamas At
ibi videlicet Prodigia, quas ego edidi per te
quasque insuper facturas idi sum. Quidam igitur
non transmissum si erat. Quidam etiam sub
Simonem impedit Hierosolymam hincant in P...
caritit ut Simon Nabe vestit detinet in P...
deserere; Et recedunt Homines illi nulli Frangi de A...
ac morantur. Simon vero Hierosolymam respicit
Negotium caritat, Rexque de se parat est. Ex
ut, Et postea, non recedisti Simon ex Aula Regis
Hic scilicet p. 125



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